



What are Principals' perspectives on situations that involve emotional work in their day-to-day lives and their perspectives on the role of emotional intelligence in the work that they do?

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education by Research

Craig Goodwin
Bachelor of Arts; Deakin University
Graduate Diploma of Education; Monash University

School of Education
College of Design and Social Context
RMIT University

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and, ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

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Abstract of Study

This study explores the way in which Primary School Principals perceive and experience emotions in their day-to-day lives. To understand the varying elements of school leadership a qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews was used, which was appropriate due to the social and psychological nature of the topic being studied. Two interviews were conducted a year apart with participants to provide a detailed examination of the participants' experiences and to gain deeper insights into their perceptions of emotions in their work.

Studies from both qualitative and relevant quantitative literature informed the analysis. In Chapter 4, coding was done by reading through the data and categorising information using predetermined (a priori) codes. Categories selected for initial analysis were instructional leadership, transformational leadership, perceptiveness, empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-regard, loneliness, role conflict, work stress, pressure, competing demands, loneliness, mentoring and collegiate groups.

Chapter 5 presents a summation of four main themes that emerged from the data analysis of the two sets of interviews. After using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach to transcribe, code and examine the interviews for careful clarification and analysis the four main themes to emerge from this study were Pressure, Relationships with Others, Relationship with Self and Support and Mentoring.

The Principals viewed emotional intelligence as an ability to recognise and appropriately respond to the emotions of themselves, their students, teachers, parents and other members within their learning community. They believed that relationships were a fundamental part of their role and that an effective leader needed strong interpersonal skills. Daily internal and external pressures were a common experience for them, impacting on their emotional wellbeing. Their relationships with themselves included considerations of self-awareness, self-regulation, self-regard, and loneliness. Participants placed great significance on their relationships with others, citing empathy, perceptiveness, self-awareness and self-regulation as important. Regarding their own need for support, they showed a preference for small local peer-to-peer collegiate groups. Principals who reported a low self-regard were unlikely to create, or participate in, collegiate groups, and so dealt with the issues in their schools in isolation. The thesis concludes with some recommendations for practice.

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Chapter One: Introduction to the Research Project

This study explores Principals' perspectives on situations that involve emotions at work in their day-to-day lives and their perspectives on the role of emotional intelligence in the work that they do. In particular, the insights they have on the aspects of emotional intelligence that are required of their position will be outlined. This study seeks to investigate the perspectives of individual school Principals about the ways in which their emotion impacts on their adjustment to their role as a Principal. It is hoped that their perspectives can give insights into both the role of emotional intelligence in the work they do and what emotional intelligence is asked of Principals as they go about their day-to-day roles.

The researcher has worked in education for almost 10 years, the last 5 years of which have been spent in leadership positions. This experience led to the beginning of the study as Principals I had come in to contact with communicated their stressful experiences to me, occasionally wearing their hearts on their sleeves as they found ways to cope with the emotional dissonance in their role. A part of my worldview is that education cannot exist in isolation from the complex relationships between Principals, teachers, staff, children and parents. This study was conducted to better understand this phenomenon.

This chapter begins by explaining the background to the study. The reasons for undertaking this research are then explained, as well as the design of the research methodology, methods and analysis. This chapter concludes by outlining the structure of the thesis.

Background to the Problem

Research into the association between Principal leadership, school improvement and gains in student learning conclude that Principals play a significant role (Heck and Hallinger, 2009; Mulford and Silins, 2009; Southwood, 2002).

Consequently, the trend which sees teachers often willing to assume leadership roles as Assistant Principals means that they are reluctant to take on the direct leadership of a Principal. In 2008 Steve Munby, the Chief Executive of the National College for School Leadership, gave voice to these concerns as he discussed educational leadership at the NCSL Annual Conference (MacBeath, 2011). He noted that new Principals felt isolated and too ill-equipped to handle the challenges of the

position and became “increasingly convinced that the notion of having one head teacher in each small primary school trying to shoulder all the responsibilities is a model that is no longer tenable or sustainable.” (MacBeath, 2011, p.113)

The manner in which the role of the Principal has changed in recent years may contribute to this sense of isolation. The increased demands relating to autonomy, efficiency and accountability have been well documented (Wildy, Clarke and Styles, 2007; Cranston, 2007; Gronn, 2003) and the great complexity of the Principal role is often seen as a deterrent for aspiring Principals because the role is perceived as daunting (d’Arbon, Duignan and Duncan, 2002).

Clarke, Wildy and Styles (2010) notes that in changing roles from that of a practicing teacher to one that is a manager of human, financial and other resources there is a significant adjustment that needs to occur. Tasks, such as implementing instructional leadership, staff evaluations, budget management, performance assessment and community relations, have been added to the role of Principal.

Wildy and Clarke (2008) and Crowe (2007) examines the considerable adjustment that occurs when moving into the role of a Principal. Managing their time, a sense of isolation from their peers and encountering negative interactions with parents, teachers and other community members are observations that are reiterated in studies exploring the unexpected challenges novice Principals face (Begley, 2000).

It seems that new Principals tend to perceive their role as more complex than initially anticipated especially in when finding unanticipated issues when dealing with tensions and dilemmas in their decision-making (Clarke, Wildy and Pepper, 2007; Clarke and Wildy, 2004; Day, Harris and Hadfield, 2001; O’Brien, Murphy and Draper, 2003). This complexity is derived from the additional responsibilities of being full-time managers of human, financial and other resources that involve a high degree of accountability. The implementation of leadership models, staff evaluation, budget management, buildings and grounds management, community relations and performance assessment has meant a greater challenge for Principals as they need a range of knowledge and skills to be an effective leader. Being an expert in curricular, pedagogical, student and adult learning, as well as interpersonal relations and communications, has meant that the current environment for Principals is daunting (Crowe, 2007; Matthews, Moorman and Nusche, 2007).

As a result, the health and wellbeing of Principals suffers. Riley (2012) discussed the impact of increased stress levels that arise from the greater emphasis

that governments place on accountability and the increase in non-educational administrative tasks, such as payroll and budgeting. Phillips and Sen (2011) reported that Principals had higher levels of stress and almost double the rate of work related mental ill-health compared to other professions (p.177 - 178).

This finding supported a study in 2004, when the Victorian Department of Education and Training conducted research in which Principals in the Government sector were found to be under “higher degrees of stress than those in comparable employment categories... Principals 79%, [other] white collar [groups] 43%” (Department of Education & Training, 2004, p. 11).

Kuper and Marmot (2003) found that Principals with minimal decision-making choices and high level, demanding roles cannot simply moderate their stress levels through time management. They also discovered that younger Principals appear to be at greater risk of coronary heart disease than their older colleagues. This has significant implications on the future of leadership within Primary schools. Principals Australia, which is the governing body designed to represent the needs of the Principal class in all Australian schools, estimates as much as 70% of Australia’s 10,000 school Principals will be within retirement age within the next five years (Riley, 2012). A consequence of this is that younger, less experienced teachers will move into the role of Principal whilst also being at risk with health issues.

Over a decade later, Riley (2015) used a Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey to identify that the demands of working as a Principal, over a 5-year period, had increased. The report provided more detail on the health of Principals, the offensive behaviour they faced and the wellbeing of Principals.

In addition to the role remaining more demanding than the general population, Riley found that the role of Principal is highly emotionally charged in all states, sectors and school types (p.28-29). He noted “Principals experience higher levels of emotional demands and emotional labour when compared to the general population. This is correlated with higher levels of burnout and stress symptoms...” (p.12)

The same report detailed that Principals required a great deal of skill in dealing with one’s own, and others, emotions in all states, sectors and school types. Once more, Riley (2015) found that having to hide emotions was a greater demand on Principals than other professions. The hiding of emotions occurs when Principals have to conceal his or her feelings at work from other people. Riley (2015) notes that this may hiding emotions from parents, student, colleagues and superiors (p.29).

Offensive behaviour was also found to have increased in the 5-year survey period. Riley (2015) found that adult-adult bullying, threats of physical violence and actual violence had all increased more rapidly than in the general population (p.13) over the course of 5 years.

At 2.2 times the rate of the general population Riley (2015) also noted that work-family conflict was still very high. The report states “This result has serious implications for the long-term future of school leaders as their work is creating significant family stress (p.55).

The current study is important as it explores Principals’ perspectives on the role emotions play in their daily lives. The participants in this study will be asked about their experiences on whether they have felt the need to hide emotions, if they have dealt with offensive behaviour and if there has been an impact of work-family relationships. This study seeks to understand how Principals understand their leadership role, how it is changing and how they see the significance of emotional intelligence in moderating the performance of these roles.

There is evidence pointing towards a correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership performance in schools (Cook, 2006; Stone, Parker and Wood, 2005). An important aspect of emotional intelligence is the ability for a person to better understand themselves as well as the people they work with. Porter (2010) adds that leaders must strive to build emotional intelligence within themselves whilst also ensuring that the staff, students and the school is involved in continuous growth. What, though, is emotional intelligence? Does it play a key factor in leadership roles?

Berkovich and Eyal (2015) noted that the most commonly referenced model of ability emotional intelligence, by Mayer and Salovey (2002), includes four abilities. The first includes the ability to perceive emotion in oneself and others. A second ability is the use of emotions to facilitate thinking. The third ability is considered to be understanding emotions and emotion processes. The fourth ability explores the management of an experience and the expression of emotions in oneself and others (p.145).

Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as having the capacity to monitor one’s own emotions, as well as other people’s. Being aware of emotions that drive behaviour and impact people in both a positive and negative sense is considered important so that emotional information can be used to guide thinking and behaviour.

Being able to perceive, manage and evaluate emotions are important aspects of being considered emotionally intelligent.

Over the past decade, several studies have suggested that emotional intelligence is a strong predictor of leadership ability in various contexts (Porter, 2010; Cheung and Tang, 2009; Momeni, 2009; Bohrer, 2007; Rosete and Ciarrochi, 2005). Bardach (2008) found that a Principal's emotional intelligence was related to the performance of the school and Krastek (2008) found emotional intelligence had a role in transforming the culture of schools. These studies appear to validate the earlier claim by Goleman (2002) that research has shed light on the power of emotionally intelligent leadership and its ability to inspire others, motivate people and keep them committed.

In considering the challenges faced by Principals, as detailed by Riley (2015), the current study aims to explore the role of emotion in Principals' work. Exploring Principals' perspectives on whether they have felt the need to hide emotions, if they have dealt with offensive behaviour or if there has been an impact of work-family relationships is an important component of this study. Understanding how Principals view their leadership role, how it is changing and how they see the significance of emotional intelligence in moderating the performance of these roles is important for this study.

The Research Study

This is a small-scale study and as such the participants were limited to six. It is important to note that Principals with varying levels of experience were involved in this project. Two of the Principals in this study had less than 5 years' experience whilst the other four participants that were interviewed had been a Principal for 10 years or more. A diversity of experience amongst the Principals may provide an opportunity for informative insights on the role of emotional intelligence in the work that they do.

As a researcher involved in the education process, there is a risk that bias stems from my own experiences when I interpret data, seeing explanations and interpretations that are already familiar to me. Whilst this bias is a possibility/probability, it may also serve as a strength of this study. I may be more likely to see and understand things that an outsider would not.

This study is important because findings that identify the insights Principals' have on the aspects of emotion in their daily lives might contribute to an understanding, and awareness of, emotions that influence behaviour in different circumstances. This is particularly relevant given the findings of Riley (2015) and the belief of Heck and Hallinger (2009) and Mulford and Silins (2009) that Principals play a significant role in school improvement and gains in student learning.

Structure of the Thesis

There are six chapters in this thesis and a description of their content follows.

Chapter 2 presents the literature that is relevant to this study. It examines what emotions are and what role they play in the day-to-day lives of Principals. The concept of emotional intelligence will then be introduced and discussed. The place of emotions and emotional intelligence will then be considered in an examination of the role of Principals as leaders. This chapter will also examine how the roles of Principals are changing and the potential for mentoring to act as a support mechanism for new and experienced Principals.

Chapter 3 outlines a qualitative interpretive methodology (Creswell, 2013) and describes how the research methods were developed. This chapter also addresses ethical issues.

Chapter 4 presents the data from the interviews as coding was done by reading through the data and categorising information using predetermined (a priori) codes.

Chapter 5 presents a summation of four main themes that emerged from the data analysis of the two sets of interviews. After using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach to transcribe, code and examine the interviews for careful clarification and analysis the four main themes to emerge from this study were Pressure, Relationships with Others, Relationship with Self and Support and Mentoring.

Chapter 6 present a discussion of the findings. Implications are explored, the research questions addressed and aspects of the study on which further investigation could be based identified.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This literature review reports on research that has explored the perceptions and understandings of the emotions involved in the day-to-day lives of Principals, as well as the role emotional intelligence may play with the emotional demands of their work.

This chapter begins by examining what emotions are and what role they play in the day-to-day lives of Principals. The concept of emotional intelligence will then be introduced and discussed. The place of emotions and emotional intelligence will then be considered in an examination of the role of Principals as leaders. This chapter will also examine how the roles of Principals are changing and the potential for mentoring to act as a support mechanism for new and experienced Principals.

Emotions

Berkovich and Eyal (2015) assert that emotions are relevant to understanding educational leaders and, in the case of this study, Principals. For the purpose of this literature review, it is understood that Principals are educational leaders who facilitate teaching and learning within a community. They aspire to work with others - be it teacher, parent, child, policy makers - to motivate them, develop their knowledge and improve their practices.

Berkovich and Eyal (2015) state the emotions are affective experiences, such as fear and joy (p.130). These emotions emerge when a person perceives situations or events to have personal significance. Emotions may be accompanied by bodily reactions, such as facial expressions. In light of the research by Riley (2015), which over the course of 5 years found that Principals felt an increasingly greater need to hide their emotions, the emotional experiences of Principals needs to be explored if we are to understand educational leaders.

Berkovich and Eyal (2015) found that understanding the emotional experiences of Principals and their reaction to the surrounding social reality, which experiences illicit positive and negative emotions, was important in their research. This study will seek to understand what events transpire for Principals to illicit these different emotions.

The behaviour of leaders' also affect the emotions of teacher, parents and children. Berkovich and Eyal (2015) noted that follower's positive emotions were linked to favourable leadership behaviours, such as transformational leadership. On

the other hand, follower's negative emotions were linked to autocratic and unfair leadership (p.131).

Principals' emotions were also found to be influenced by macro factors (Berkovich and Eyal, 2015). When conditions are altered and macro-political actions occur, this can result in endemic and chronic conditions of leadership life, such as vulnerability, isolation, and fear of the loss of power (Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski, 2004). Reflecting on this research, there is a need for this study to ask Principals about their experience with these conditions and how they balance these aspects of their leadership life. Do strong emotions exist within a learning community, not only for the Principal but amongst the heads of department, staff, parents and students?

In understanding educational leadership, Blasé and Blasé (2004) noted that “an awareness and understanding of emotions, the ability to manage one's emotions, and the ability to express emotions in appropriate ways, given the context, are regarded as critical to effective school leadership.” (p.258) Spainhower (2008) and Cai (2011) found that successful Principals possess high emotional intelligence abilities as Principals with high emotional intelligence are adaptive, effective, demonstrate transformational leadership and can ‘turnaround’, or improve, low performing schools.

The following section of this literature review will provide a definition of emotional intelligence, an overview of the three approaches and the relevance of the ability model to this study.

Models of Emotional Intelligence

According to the revised definition of Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004), emotional intelligence is the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions, to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (p.197).

There are three distinctive approaches taken to emotional intelligence in the psychological realm. This section of the literature review will provide an overview of the abilities model, the mixed model model and the trait based model that is used.

Table 1

Comparison of Three Major Emotional and Emotional-Social Intelligence Assessment Tools

Model	Definition	Measurement
Goleman (1998)	Features an array of intelligence and skills, such as emotional awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.	Mixed model approach
Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (2004)	The ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions to facilitate thinking.	Ability-based approach using self-reporting
Petrides, K. V., Pita, R., and Kokkinaki, F. (2007)	Emotional intelligence is part of a person's personality, emotional perceptions and emotional traits	Trait-based approach using self-reporting

Note: Adapted from Spielberger, C. (2004). *The Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology*. Academic Press

There are three models of emotional intelligence that can be distinguished: ability model, mixed model and trait model.

The mixed model combines skills, competencies and capabilities (Goleman, 1995; Bar-On, 1997). Goleman (1995) emphasised the need to know one's emotions, manage emotions, motivate oneself, recognise emotions in others and handle relationships. In summary, the ability model and mixed model share similarities as both models accentuate two key components: management of one's own emotions and understanding the emotions of others.

Next, the newest of all the models, the trait model of emotional intelligence (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007), can be defined as a constellation of emotional self-perception located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007). It is assessed through the trait emotional intelligence questionnaire (Petrides, 2010). According to this model, emotional intelligence is determined by an individual understanding of self-abilities. Petrides (2010) draws the analogy with personality traits by providing a research finding from Vernon, Villani, Schermer, and

Petrides (2008) that the same genes responsible for the development of Big Five personality traits are also involved in the development of emotional intelligence traits.

One of the critiques of the traits based approach is the subjective nature of using self-reporting. Another criticism of the trait based model of emotional intelligence is the notion that emotional intelligence can be partially determined by nature. This current study seeks to understand Principals' perceptions on whether emotional intelligence can be learned or are they traits that are inherited?

Joseph and Newman (2010) identified that validity problems exist for trait and mixed-trait approaches where individuals conceptualise individuals' emotional intelligence through the self-perception of their emotional abilities.

Regarding all three theories for emotional intelligence, Berkovich and Eyal (2015) note that empathy and emotional regulation have a theoretical and empirical basis that is independent of the emotional intelligence framework (p.145). Joseph and Newman (2010) noted that tests that measure emotional intelligence abilities provide statements or problems that individuals solve (e.g., MSCEIT) whereas tests that measure traits are self-report questionnaires (e.g., EQ-i, Schutte EI model).

Finally, this brings us to the third tool commonly used to measure emotional intelligence in the management literature. The ability model has been used for leadership development, career development, executive coaching and the selection of individuals for leadership positions. In order to measure individual abilities, the Mayer - Salovey - Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) is used as it provides a set of emotional problem-solving tasks. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004) define emotional intelligence as:

... the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions, to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (p.197).

Working with this model, it is expected that individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence might display certain characteristics, which are summarised as:

1. Perception, use and understanding feelings: the ability to perceive your own and others' emotions; using them in thoughts and understanding the meaning these feelings (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2008)

2. Managing feelings: the ability to understand when and how to use your feelings and helping others to use theirs appropriately (Jones and Hutchins, 2004)
3. Self-motivation: a highly emotional intelligent individual may be able to describe their motivational goals and aims as they seek to control their future (Jones and Hutchins, 2004)
4. Handling both social and work relationships: relating well to other people and fostering better quality relationships (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2008) and,
5. Empathy: the ability to understand others' feelings so that support can be offered to him or her (Jones and Hutchins, 2004)

Given that the ability model references the handling of social and work relationships it raises the importance of the interpersonal aspect of emotional intelligence. Additionally, intrapersonal awareness is mentioned, particularly the need to perceive one's own emotions. The ability to perceive, and use emotions, to facilitate thinking offer additional insights as to how emotional intelligence may be understood by Principals.

In order to understand the ability model further, the next aspect of the literature review presents some of the findings that have resulted from the use of the MSCEIT model.

Findings using Emotional Intelligence Measurement Tools

Mayer, Roberts and Barsade (2008) identified trends that appeared to extend across several studies in both qualitative and quantitative studies of the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso model, often referred to as the MSCEIT model. The understandings contained within the General Effect table, summarised below, offers the opportunity for comparisons to be made to the current study.

Table 2

Summary of studies using the MSCEIT model to investigate the role of emotional intelligence

General Effect	Studies
1. Better social relations for children. Among children and adolescents, EI positively correlates with good social relations and negatively correlates with social deviance, measured both in and out of school as reported by children themselves, their family members, and their teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denham et al. (2003) • Eisenberg et al. (2000) • Fine et al. (2003) • Izard et al. (2001)
2. Better social relations for adults. Among adults, higher EI leads to greater self-perception of social competence and less use of destructive interpersonal strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brackett et al. (2006) • Lopes et al. (2004)
3. High-EI individuals are perceived more positively by others. Others perceive high-EI individuals as more pleasant to be around, more empathic, and more socially adroit than those low in EI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brackett et al. (2006) • Lopes et al. (2004) • Lopes et al. (2005)
4. Better family and intimate relationships. EI is correlated with some aspects of family and intimate relationships as reported by self and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brackett et al. (2005) • Carton et al. (1999)
5. Better academic achievement. EI is correlated with higher academic achievement as reported by teachers, but generally not with higher grades once IQ is considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barchard (2003) • Izard et al. (2001) • O'Connor and Little (2003)
6. Better social relations during work performance and in negotiations. EI is correlated with more positive performance outcomes and negotiation outcomes in the laboratory and with more success at work, according to some preliminary research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Côté and Miners (2006) • Elfenbein et al. (2007) • Rubin et al. 2005
7. Better psychological wellbeing. EI is correlated with greater life satisfaction and self-esteem and lower ratings of depression; EI also is correlated inversely with some negative physical behaviours, but this has not yet been found as a strong set of relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bastian et al. (2005) • Gohm et al. (2005) • Matthews et al. (2006)

Note: Adapted from Mayer, J. D., Roberts, R. D., and Barsade, S. G. (2008). Human abilities: Emotional intelligence. *Annual Review Psychology*, 59, 507-536.

The findings of these studies highlight a number of factors relevant to the role and work experiences of Principals as this table presents a brief overview of the relationship of emotional intelligence to other aspects of social and psychological life. Mayer, Roberts and Barsade (2008) found that emotional intelligence correlated with better social relationships for both children and adults, which is information that is transferable to an educational setting. Additionally, the General Effects table notes that emotional intelligence can lead to better family relationships. These findings are

important given the concerns mentioned by Riley (2015) as Principals are reporting higher levels of work-family conflict, the need to hide emotions and offensive behaviour in their workplace.

This table influenced this study as the MSCEIT model has shown there are some findings of the abilities model of emotional intelligence that are linked to social relationships. An understanding of how Principals use emotional intelligence to inform their relationships with parents, teachers, children and external parties was a component of the interviews.

Most importantly, the General Effects table mentioned above began to address some of the main concerns of emotional intelligence. These are presented below and a discussion of how these alternative perspectives influenced this study will be presented.

Critiques of Emotional Intelligence Models

Tension exists between the understanding of emotional intelligence as a psychological characteristic found in individuals and the understanding that emotion can be socially constructed. Emotional intelligence has been framed in the management literature as a set of acquired skills to better manage others. The idea that emotion emerges within certain social interactions, and the meaning and value given to certain emotions, will be explored in this section of the literature review.

Goleman (2002) notes that an emotionally intelligent leader should be able to select a leadership style that positively impacts their followers. However, Sachs and Blackmore (1998), as well as Blackmore (2010b, 2011), argue that teaching and leading cannot be seen as an individualised pursuit because emotion depends on contextual and relational understandings.

This view is supported by Berkovich and Eyal (2015) and Schmidt (2000). They also noted that emotions are contextualised, political and relational so emotions need to be seen as more than the expression of individual psychological attributes. Berkovich and Eyal (2015) found that the organizational literature suggests that context influences emotions.

This is relevant to this current study as an understanding of the sociological importance to emotions at work emerged through the MSCEIT findings presented earlier in this chapter.

Sachs and Blackmore (1998) believe Goleman's definition of emotional intelligence helps people to manage their emotions in socially acceptable and appropriate ways but without proper consideration given to context. They suggest that the emotional intelligence model serves to regulate emotions. They argued that in Goleman's emotional intelligence model the individual needs to be in control of their feelings and emotions if they were to be taken seriously and be rewarded with a promotion. The findings of Riley (2015), which found that Principals felt the need to hide their emotions, reflects this concern.

This view of the decontextualized leader is taken up by Blackmore (2011) who argues that emotional intelligence is a flawed theory as it focuses on the leader as an individual and the capacities, skills or attributes they have, which differentiates the leader from others in the organisation. The limitations and possibilities that arise from contextual and situated relationships around the Principals work are largely ignored. As such, this study will seek to explore how Principals perceive emotional intelligence as being relevant to them in successfully managing power relations in their context.

Discussions about emotions at work also fail to address the substantive issues of identity formation within wider social and structural relations of power (Blackmore, 2010b). Relating emotional intelligence to individual acquisition of competency, Leithwood (2006) believes, diminishes any political analysis of organisational or community power relations to an individual level.

The notion of 'emotional intelligence', Blackmore (2011) argues, also assumes that there is a homogenous culture, a shared sense of purpose, a common identity and values that are uncontested. She expresses concern that the organisation and the individual leader are treated as largely universal concepts, where specific histories and identities that have been formed and negotiated through unequal social relations of class, race, gender and ethnicity are ignored. This is a view that was shared by Boler (1999), who outlines the manner in which emotions are embodied within culture and ideology. Additionally, he shares the view that emotions have a linguistic dimension that is about emotional awareness and how people create meaning.

Similarly, Blackmore (2010a) argues that emotional intelligence models do not recognise a difference in power and how power relations shape the way emotions are understood, perceived and displayed differently. She argues that rendering

emotions as acquirable skills ignore how emotions are central to identity and how 'ways of being' are influenced by gender, race, social expectations and stereotypes. Context, it could be argued, is crucial as leadership and emotions are shaped and acted upon as a social, relational practice.

Blackmore (2011) also notes that another cost of seeing emotional intelligence as an individual attribute is that a Principal is required to ensure that teachers do not leave the profession because the teacher might feel undervalued and overloaded. Rather, a Principal is meant to be able to fix these problems so that teachers' stay regardless of what the context, system, support or resources may be available. Allegre and Ferrer (2010) refer to this as 'heroic individualism', in which a Principal can resolve issues regardless of context. They raise concerns that defining emotional intelligence as a personal attribute that can be acquired encourages heroic individualism, which is detrimental to a Principals' wellbeing. They believe that emotions should be seen as being part of being human and, for Principals, this means working with collective relationships of trust that are informed by the location, profile and expectations of the school.

Blackmore (2011) and Zorn and Boler (2007) argue that professional development for Principals need to address the deep emotions of empathy, compassion and care, fear, anger and resentment. However, to address these areas there is a need for a 'pedagogy of discomfort' (Blackmore, 2011). This approach would require leaders to address their professional and personal identities and the manner in which power relations are based on gender, race and class.

Ultimately, by creating models of emotional intelligence and treating emotions as individualised attributes, Blackmore (2013) feels that the discourse ignores how emotion is displayed, perceived and understood differently based on factors such as gender, racial or cultural positioning.

This is relevant to the study as several questions for the first round of interviews emerged:

*How do Principals maintain good social relations with people in their community?

*What interpersonal qualities assist Principals in achieving better social relations with adults?

*How could emotions help a Principal perceive emotions in others?

*Why would intrapersonal intelligence – the ability to understand when and how to use your feelings – be considered important for Principals?

*Have you felt any pressure to project a certain image around emotions at work?

*In what way is self-regulation an important part of being a Principal?

If there is to be a greater understanding of the emotions that are required in the daily lives of Principals, there appears to be a need to understand the role of emotional intelligence, leadership approaches and the role of emotions in leading change.

Emotional Intelligence and Approaches to Leadership in Schools

In the research literature, the most common leadership approaches undertaken in schools, which are often linked to emotional intelligence, are that of instructional and transformational leadership (Hallinger and Heck, 2010; Bass, 2008; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005; Leithwood, Louise, Anderson and Wahlstrom 2004; Silins and Mulford, 2002).

Hallinger (2003) explained that an instructional approach focused on strong, directive leadership on curriculum and instruction from the Principal. Direct coordination, control and supervision of curriculum and instruction were considered essential elements of this leadership approach. In contrast, Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) made an important distinction between the two leadership theories by stating that transformational leadership emphasizes ‘emotion and values and share in common the fundamental aim of fostering capacity development and higher levels of personal commitment’ (p.31).

Hallinger (2003) describes transformational leadership approach as having the following key features: individualised support, shared goals, vision, intellectual stimulation, culture building, rewards, high expectations and modelling (p.335 – 336). The behavioural components of this approach - particularly the need for individualised support, intellectual stimulation and person vision - suggest that the model is grounded in the need to understand the needs of the individual (Hallinger, 2003, p.337).

One of the key components of emotional intelligence includes the ability to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought and to understand emotions and emotional knowledge (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2004, p.197). This is relevant to the findings of Hallinger (2003)

The role of perceiving and understanding emotions is important when considering the distinctions that are apparent between these two leadership theories. Hallinger (2003) details how the transformational approach allows for a Principal to focus on individual development of others within the learning community. The instructional model may emphasise the Principals' directions and the coordination of instruction, however the transformational leadership model places the focus on teachers' motivations and commitment impacting upon instruction and curriculum, thereby influencing student learning outcomes.

Kirby, Paradise and King (2010) validated the findings of Hallinger and Heck (2010) as they found that transformational leadership, with its capacity to focus on development of the individual, creates the circumstances needed for innovation. A school can select its purposes and support the development of change to practices in teaching and learning. This supports Silins and Mulford's (2002) view that schools that are seeking transformation are expected to be purposeful and collaborative.

Leadership, Harris (2010) points out, should be fundamentally concerned with the building of positive relationships and the empowerment of others to lead. When comparing the instructional leadership model and the transformational leadership model, Hallinger and Heck (2010) found that in schools where transformational leadership was used Principals were "better at supporting staff, providing recognition, knowing problems of school, were more approachable, follow through, seek new ideas, and spent considerable time developing human resources" (p.339). The opportunity for genuine, lasting school renewal would appear to be given a great chance under the right conditions in which Principals could perceive, understand and process the emotions of their staff, traits found within the abilities based model of emotional intelligence.

Harris (2010) and Ritchie and Woods (2007) argued that it was important to understand, however, that those in current leadership positions will determine the success of a transformational leadership model, because the Principal will need to build a supportive structure and an organisational environment that ensures the continued development of this decision making process. Again, emotional intelligence

seemingly plays an important role in being able to foster such an environment. This will inform the questioning within the interview as the researcher explores with the participants what emotional intelligence Principals perceive as being important in empowering teachers and building positive relationships.

The ability to successfully implement transformational leadership needs to be considered in light of the challenges that Principals face. Whilst there is an expectation that Principals will be able to reason about emotions, perceive emotions, understand emotions and regulate emotions (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2004, p.197) this needs to be better understood.

According to the revised definition of Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004), emotional intelligence is the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions, to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (p.197), the next section of literature review will explore the changing role of leadership and the challenges that Principals face. Given the challenges that Riley (2015) outlined in his 5 year study, this may allow for a better understanding of the role context plays in influencing the emotions Principals feel at work.

Challenges that Confront a Principal

Berkovich and Eyal (2015), Gunter (2012) and Thomson (2009) found that the constant drive of educational reform is having enormous consequences on school leaders. Berkovich and Eyal (2015) detail how educational systems were driven by a bureaucratic governance model whereby schools were domesticated, stable organisations. However, changes in the economic, social, political and technological domains have made education the focus of large-scale reforms (p.131). As a result, Schmidt (2010) claims that Principals face an unstable and competitive environment.

MacBeath (2011) asked beginning Principals about their level of confidence in dealing with varying aspects of leadership and management. The areas that emerged as the most problematic were in feeling required to transform the school workforce, manage ineffective staff, coping with community demands, dealing with personal stresses and having control over their own time.

However, the reports by Riley (2011, 2015) indicate that the constantly changing educational environment regarding resources, accountability demands and curriculum place pressure upon experienced Principals too. Of his respondents in the most recent study Principals have been in the current role for 4.1 years (p.11). This is relevant to this current study as Principals with varying degrees of experience will be asked about the changes in their role and what impact this has had on their emotions at work.

This is partly because the Principal is considered the solution to education's problems in that the Principal is considered the fundamental player determining present performance and in leading to successful school change when required (Hallinger and Heck, 2010). Additionally, much of the literature based around leadership still largely assumes that leadership is an individual trait, characteristic, behaviour or practice (Mills and Niesche, 2014; Zorn and Boler, 2007). What is often lacking from these discussions, according to Gronn (2009), is that when a person takes a leadership position they are rarely, if ever, asked about the emotions that are involved when developing the necessary interpersonal skills required to understand others and to communicate with them effectively.

Given these pressures of dealing with and transforming a workforce related to educational reform due to macro-political actions, and given the person-centered nature of the leadership required, it is increasingly difficult for the professional and personal lives of Principals to be separated (Brennan & Mac Ruairc, 2011). Brennan and Mac Ruairc's (2011) in-depth qualitative enquiry explored the notion of burnout as Principals, who were either beginning their professional careers or were experienced, tried to cope with the emotional dissonance that can be created from the demands of constantly evolving circumstances. Emotional dissonance is defined having to regulate an emotion and maintain a difference between inner feeling and the emotional expression that is occurring to satisfy expected norms (Hochschild, 1983, p.90)

Kelchtermans (2007) noted that a Principal, and the other members of a learning community, have a need to establish a clear understanding of the working conditions needed to do their job effectively. Emotional dissonance occurs when expectations are altered and members of the learning community might engage in micro-political actions so that those conditions can be safeguarded or restored. In other words, the community within which the Principal operates expect certain

conditions that develop and protect their professional interests. When conditions are altered and micro-political actions occur, this can result in endemic and chronic conditions of leadership life, such as vulnerability, isolation, and fear of the loss of power (Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski, 2004). This research indicates that strong emotions exist within a learning community not only for the Principal but it may also be apparent amongst the heads of department, staff, parents and students.

In their secondary analysis of qualitative findings from 11 separate studies Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) suggested that Principals experience these chronic conditions when they find themselves at a crossroads in which different interests and agendas are competing as parents, staff and government departments seek to create their preferred working conditions.

Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) explored the ‘outside-school perspective’, in which Principals navigate relationships with several parties that operate outside the school. One is the School Board, which is considered the immediate authority and which employs both the Principal and his or her staff. There are also the parents, who may seek to discuss matters individually or in the form of a parents’ committee. In either form, parents are involved in the process of addressing local policy and school management. The third party are the policymakers who, whilst not directly influencing the school on a day-to-day basis, often appear in the sense of addressing legal or administrative rules, procedures and demands. Further complicating matters is the fact that policymakers may be from a national or regional background and, thus, have particular requirements which may be at odds with those conditions sought by the school board or the parents. In contrast, the ‘inside-school perspective’ – which includes school staff and pupils - engage with the Principal on a daily basis and expect that the working conditions that allow for the smooth functioning of the school will be created or maintained by the Principal. A certain level of control and predictability is expected. Additionally, the staff expect the Principal to be on their side when there is a clash between the interests of the ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ (Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet, 2011).

Schmidt (2009) explored the demands and expectations on what good education looks like, how it can be achieved, and how different perspectives can come into conflict. His finding was that the Principal is expected to deal with these competing demands and react to the associated pressures. Schmidt (2009) has raised

concerns that having to find a balance between competing demands creates a sense of conflict whereby loyalties are challenged.

Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) document how Principals feel a conflict between loneliness and belonging when the demands of the ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ differ. Experiencing such conflict can take an emotional toll. Ultimately, leadership actions are inseparable from and influenced by emotions (Schmidt, 2009; Crawford, 2007). There is a need to justify these findings by asking Principals if they have had experiences with conflicting ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ and how they have handled these situations. Additionally, the findings of Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) can be addressed in this current study by asking Principals about the way in which they navigate the sense of belonging in their day-to-day lives.

Crawford (2007) says that the moral commitment a Principal undertakes to lead others requires leadership that brings with it a variety of political issues and emotional responses. Furthermore, Blackmore (2004) notes that individuals in a school environment are expected to be resilient and can self-manage whilst also handling ambiguity and uncertainty. A Principal needs to be adept at evaluating differing interests, controlling unwarranted attempts to influence through power and negotiate with competing demands successfully (Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet, 2011; Schmidt, 2010; Gronn, 2009). Given this research, it is important to establish whether Principals can express the role resilience and self-management play in coping with value-laden agendas.

Decision-making is not free of value-laden deliberation for a Principal. Knowing that each decision is open to possible criticism from ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ and that their professional and personal integrity may be called into question it is understandable that a Principal may feel stressed when deciding on action. As a result, Blackmore (2004) argues Principals struggle with competing demands. On the one hand, they wish to lead and teach as this is an area of passion and one in which they can address the needs of all their students for socially just outcomes. However, when dealing with ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ there is a necessity to meet the new performativities that are required by markets and management, which Blackmore argues are essential for a school’s survival.

A school leader needs to be emotionally prepared when taking on the role (Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet, 2011; Beatty, 2007a). The dynamics of the

relationship a Principal has with others in the community plays a vital role in the daily life of the Principal and the emotions that are felt. Doing the right thing, when dealing with competing demands, appears to be incredibly difficult when various parties offer differing definitions of what is right. A sense of ‘self’ – the ability to acknowledge one’s strengths and weaknesses, finding a way to articulate their own values and valuing differences of opinion – may allow for ongoing personal development whilst also interacting with others.

As the revised definition of Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004) explains that emotional intelligence is the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions, to enhance thinking (p.197) this current study will seek to understand the role contextual factors play in the identity of Principals.

Whilst there is an increased interest in emotional intelligence and needs of Principals, schools are still very much held up as examples of a rational organisation (Mills and Niesche, 2014; Beatty, 2007b). This was a view shared by Sachs and Blackmore (1998), who examined the importance placed on being a ‘rational’ organisation as reason, cognition and thinking are processes that are linked to rational decision making. Within the definition of emotional intelligence provided by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004), emotional intelligence requires the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (p.197). On the other hand, passion, affect and feeling are viewed as indices of emotionality. Sachs and Blackmore (1998) point out that emotionality is seen to be inappropriate in schools as importance is placed on the need for emotional control so that day-to-day running functions are seen to be effective and efficient.

Sachs and Blackmore (1998) argued that Principals who can make decisions in a detached way, follow corporate expectations and can achieve strategic aims are more likely to achieve personal success. Additionally, Hargreaves (1997) pointed out that emotions are talked about insofar as they help Principals and administrators manage and offset teachers’ resistance to change. The more volatile, passionate emotions are ignored as those emotions that encourage trust, support, openness, involvement and a commitment to teamwork are given greater value. In contrast, Blackmore (2004) argued that volatile and passionate emotions often surface at an operational level as they are a form of discomfort and opposition to political reforms that may be altering the practices and purpose of teaching and leading. Furthermore,

Blackmore noted that although there are high levels of stress for Principals when their values are compromised emotions may be a form of resistance that can lead to problem solving and progress.

Having to balance the demands of ‘outside-school perspectives’ – particularly state policy – with the best interest of staff involves ‘emotional labour’ (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). Using Principals’ first person accounts of their experiences within a phenomenological research design, Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004) focused on the individual leader’s meaning of the phenomenon of having to undertake this ‘emotional labour’ along with the notion of leaders being wounded. A form of wounding emerged in Principals when reform from government departments was found to create a sense of helplessness and a lack of trust (Blackmore, 2004).

Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004), in their qualitative study of Principals experiences of emotion on the job, found that a prominent theme was that of ‘structural loneliness’ – meaning the Principal felt isolated from others. This isolation was a consequence of the high emotional cost that is a part of the challenging process in negotiating with competing demands. When working as a teacher, many Principals were used to working in a team that helped establish a sense of identity and Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004) and Kelchtermans (2005) documented the deeply felt need by teachers to feel part of a whole, to experience a sense of belonging. The Principal has been part of this community but has now been elevated to a leadership role and the responsibilities and conflicting demands, loyalties, of the position. With the movement to become a Principal there is a different relationship to the group that they previously belonged to. Principals become separated from the group that they once belonged too and yet they remain connected due to their responsibility to that group, as well as other groups within the education setting that may have different agendas.

Mills and Niesche (2014) suggested that there is a need to understand the complexities and challenges of various emotional investments and to understand how leaders are negotiating these issues when dealing with an array of ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’. If there is to be a greater understanding of emotions at work, emotional intelligence and the challenges of the leadership role, then the information presented in this section of the literature review is relevant to the study because it raises some important questions for the interview. For example:

* In the last 3-5 years that you have been a Principal, in what manner has your role evolved?

*When have you experienced tension conflicting ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’?

*Is there a tension between wanting to ‘belong’ to either ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ and loneliness?

*How might seeking collegiality be important to some Principals?

The next section explores the research literature (MacBeath, 2011; Cranston, 2007; Sparks and Switzer, 2007) that suggests mentoring can offer the guidance and support for Principals that allows for a sense of belonging. This is discussed in the following section of the chapter.

Mentoring for Inexperienced Principals

A collective approach to mentoring may offer support for Principals with varying levels of experience. Rather than Principals operating alone after that initial first year and being deprived of opportunities to reflect on their practice and gather appropriate feedback from others, Smith (2007) surmises that group or peer mentoring which assists in the construction of new knowledge and new ways of being professional are possible with the formation of a Principals’ Group.

Smith (2007) carried out a project in which Principals voluntarily sought to form a community of skilled learning with Principals from different schools. This initiative provided Principals with the opportunity for active and organised participation in relevant and challenging learning. Sharing professional understandings and their expertise enabled the Principals to contribute in mutually meaningful and beneficial ways that created a sense of belonging and reduced the sense of isolation.

This forum for the Principals was also beneficial for its role in helping to reduce feelings of stress and isolation. Given the demanding and time-consuming role of being a Principal, Smith (2007) found that this group mentoring for experienced Principals was supportive as one Principal reflected “The meetings are reflective and that’s really worthwhile, it’s a good use of time and time is probably our most precious commodity” (p.283). Maintaining a focus on their professional lives, this

community shared their knowledge and experiences in free-flowing ways. By discussing varying approaches to problems from ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ this forum provided an opportunity for the Principals to learn from each other. However, such a learning approach for Principals would be redundant if not for trust.

Smith (2007) found that the Principals in her study saw themselves as insiders. Consequently, the Principals viewed each other as equals and this enabled feelings of trust. Earlier in this literature review the notion of structural loneliness raised the question of where the Principal felt they belonged, particularly as many come from a teachers’ background that they can no longer be as closely connected with. Having mechanisms in place that support Principals in creating a community of shared learning would appear to potentially address this issue. As such, the researcher has sought to address the role of emotional intelligence in understanding if self-regard is an important facet of experience for a Principal to seek when participating in such a program.

MacBeath (2011) argues that beginning Principals both need and benefit from a professional program that is attuned to their immediate needs whilst also offering an intellectually challenging and emotionally satisfying environment. Given the importance of context in understanding emotions at work and the challenges facing Principals, a mentoring program may address the immediate need of skills as defined by the ability-based model of emotional intelligence. A program that develops the capacity to reason about emotions to enhance thinking, learn to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2004, p.197) may provide Principals with a sense of belonging, skill development and a better understanding of the complex demands of their day-to-day work.

Boyatzis and McKee (2005) concluded that school leaders can experience renewal in their role by bonding with others. The use of personal stories is believed to lead to trust, empathy and an awareness of how best to support other Principals. It is important to note that whilst MacBeath (2011), Cranston (2007) and Sparks and Switzer (2007) examined the role of a mentor and highlighted the benefits, very little attention was paid to notions of power in the mentor-mentee relationship and the emotional toll that issues of power may have had on beginning Principals in their

studies. Retelle (2010b) and Riley (2009) substantiate and highlight a lack of progress in addressing a possible power imbalance in the mentoring relationship. Riley (2009) noted that the relationship between mentors and protégés was often fraught with danger due to the unequal distribution of power that is already found in education due to the hierarchical nature of positions. In her study, Retelle (2010a) observed Principals who were being shadowed for a year by a first-year Assistant Principal. In addition to an imbalance of power, she found that several factors contributed to a genuine lack of mentoring. Firstly, the Principals she studied formed rapid perceptions that Assistant Principals were performing at high levels and therefore needed little to no meeting time. This resulted in feelings of disillusionment as the Assistant Principals, who wanted regular feedback on their performance, were left to self-assess. Retelle (2010b) also found that there were no guidelines or support in place so that Principals could understand what the mentoring role entailed.

Retelle (2010b) suggests that the process of selecting a mentor needs to be given careful consideration. A mentor needs to be able to provide a highly trusting environment as mutual trust underpins the relationship; they should be a sensitive advisor who provides guidance in the knowledge that their protégé is in an important stage of development, and they should try to provide a safe environment so that learning may occur.

This information provides further questions for the interviews:

*How does mentoring of Principals assist in understanding emotions in varying contexts?

*What role does the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions play in the development of (mentoring) relationships?

Summary of the Literature

The first section of this chapter provided an explanation on emotions and how emotions are relevant to understanding educational leaders and, in the case of this study, Principals. Positive and negative emotions were explored in the day-to-day lives of Principals and the result that altered conditions may have on the emotions felt.

The second section of this chapter presented an understanding of emotional intelligence, as it has been presented in the management literature. Several concepts

were unpacked in the differing models discussed, such as the need for Principals to have empathy for others. Intrapersonal intelligence was mentioned too.

The third section examined some of the trends that appeared to extend across several studies for the ability based model of emotional intelligence, often referred to as the MSCEIT model. The General Effects table drew attention to the way in which Principals used emotional intelligence to inform their relationships with themselves and others.

The next segment of the literature review offered a critique of emotional intelligence theories. Blackmore (2013) argued that if there is to be a greater understanding of the emotions that are required in the daily lives of Principals, there appears to be a need to understand the role of context and how it can inform a sense of powerlessness, anger and despair.

Transformational leadership was then explored in this literature review as it is seen as an effective approach for a Principal when seeking to engage, and empower, his or her staff. The role of emotional intelligence in being able to empower teachers and build positive relationships was explored.

The next portion of the literature review explored the stress and pressure that arise from the day-to-day events that Principals' experience. As they seek to balance the 'inside-' and 'outside-school perspectives' there are demands that are conflictual and therefore emotional demands are placed on Principals.

Given the possibility of loneliness, the research of Smith (2007) was considered as mentoring for beginning and established Principals was examined as a means for Principals to have a sense of belonging so that they could receive support for the day-to-day pressures that they have.

It is important to acknowledge the intrinsic problems that can arise when reading the varied meanings and understandings that exist for common words used in educational research. Therefore, it was a challenging task to reduce this wealth of research into a short summary while synthesizing the pertinent information so as to construct a framework for this research.

This chapter now concludes by presenting the main questions that have emerged as a result of this literature review chapter. These questions have been designed to draw out the responses from Principals' in how they perceive and experience emotions in their day-to-day lives. The questions are pertinent to the study as they will provide opportunities for Principals to elaborate on their thinking and provide

rich detail. These questions underpin the research question and the study's methodological approach as the researchers seek to understand Principals' experiences with emotions in their day-to-day lives. The questions are:

- How do Principals maintain good social relations with people in their community?
- What interpersonal qualities assist Principals in achieving better social relations with adults?
- How could emotions help a Principal perceive emotions in others?
- Why would intrapersonal intelligence – the ability to understand when and how to use your feelings – be considered important for Principals?
- Have you felt any pressure to project a certain image around emotions at work?
- In what way is self-regulation an important part of being a Principal?
- In the last 3-5 years that you have been a Principal, in what manner has your role evolved?
- When have you experienced tension conflicting 'outside-' and 'inside-school perspectives'?
- Is there a tension between wanting to 'belong' to either 'outside-' and 'inside-school perspectives' and loneliness?
- How might seeking collegiality be important to some Principals?
- How does mentoring of Principals assist in understanding emotions in varying contexts?
- What role does the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions play in the developing of a mentoring relationship?
- Are there other inherent limitations that the literature has not uncovered?

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This study seeks to explore participants' perspectives regarding emotions at work and the role emotions, emotional intelligence and context play in the day-to-day lives of Principals. To understand the varying emotional elements of leadership, it was decided that a qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews was most appropriate due to the social and psychological nature of the topic being studied. The researcher conducted two interviews were conducted a year apart to provide a detailed examination of the participants' life-worlds (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Life-worlds refers to the personal experiences of Principals and an individuals' personal account of an event, which is different from attempting to produce an objective statement of the event itself. This chapter explains the research design, participant selection, methods for data collection and data analysis and, finally, the ethical considerations relevant to this study.

Research Design

I am deeply interested in the lives of Principals and the role in which emotional intelligence informs and positively impacts their professional careers. I view the role of a Principal as an important conduit through which school improvement can take place. This view and interest aligns with my philosophical preference for a social constructivist approach to the design of this study (Creswell, 2013, p.24).

Social constructivism is an interpretive framework whereby individuals seek to understand their world and develop their own particular meaning that corresponds to their experience (Creswell, 2013). These meanings are formed through interaction with others (Creswell, 2013).

In studying Principals' perceptions of emotions at work and the role of emotional intelligence, I applied the interpretive framework of social constructivism by asking research participants semi-structured questions (Creswell, p.25). I used this approach to allow the research participants an opportunity to describe their own experiences. As the researcher, my role was to listen carefully to their views and interpret the findings based on their background and experiences (Creswell, 2013).

As such, I constructed and utilised a one-to-one interview process with my research participants so that I could better understand Principals' perspectives on situations that involve emotions at work in their day-to-day lives and their perspectives on the role emotional intelligence plays in their work by recording their narratives and analyzing their accounts.

The stories of each Principal are explicitly subjective and so do not guarantee a 'truth' because each experience and memory occurs inside a cultural and social framework that gives it meaning (Smith, 2007). Understanding emotions at work and how emotional intelligence can be used to support Principals in their daily lives supports the assertion by Brennan and Mac Ruairc (2011) that school leadership research should engage in a robust interrogation of meaningful work and emotions. It is only by creating the space to articulate the nature of being a Principal, warts and all, that a theoretical language can be developed so that people are more able to describe their feelings and have an expressive language for it. It therefore made sense to focus this study around a qualitative interpretive methodology.

Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) noted that a key principal of qualitative researchers is understanding how individuals make sense of their world, how they experience events and what meaning the participants glean from their experiences. The research question at the heart of this study is framed broadly and openly as the aim was to explore, flexibly and in detail, Principals' meaning and sense-making of their emotions at work and the place of emotional intelligence in their daily lives.

The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed for themes using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) note that IPA is a double heuristic approach because the researcher is interpreting the participant's views of a lived experience.

The key techniques of an IPA approach, after conducting the interviews, was to be immersed in the recording of each interview by listening to each recording at least twice. A transcription of the recordings was made and then immersion was sought in this transcription by reading them twice.

This led to an initial coding. The understanding of Principals and how they perceive emotions, emotional intelligence and context occurred through the exploration of language, context and meaning.

I used the description of Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014), who outlined the need for the next step in the process to consider the emergent themes from the data was. A

list of these themes was created and then the transcripts were searched for connections that existed across these emergent themes.

These steps were repeated for all six participants in this study and, once more, after the second interviews had been conducted. Undertaking an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis meant that I could identify the complexity of the interactions that Principals may face as their experiences are understood from a participant's perspective (Smith, 2007). The researcher therefore formulates central questions when analysing the interviews, such as: What is the person trying to achieve here? Is anything meaningful being said here? Do I have a sense of something going on here that perhaps the person himself or herself is unaware of? As a result, such studies require the researcher to make interpretations too, which makes the analysis richer and more comprehensive (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014; Smith, 2007). An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis approach means studies are usually smaller in scale, which enables a detailed and time consuming case-by-case analysis (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). By having a smaller sample size of Principals' the researcher was afforded the time to conduct two interviews with each participant so that a development of insights from the first data set could inform the questions asked in the second interview (Lichtman, 2013).

The design of this study was based on the expectation that a detailed account would emerge about participant's perspectives regarding emotions at work, emotional intelligence and the role it can play in assisting Principals in various Primary Schools. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and an hour. They were conducted by the researcher and transcribed shortly after the interviews were completed. By setting each participant's 1st and 2nd interview 12 months apart it allowed for close analysis of each data set to inform the 2nd interview, in which the semi-structured interview followed a general set of questions whilst also offering the opportunity to ask specialised and relevant questions of each Principal.

The use of interviews to collect data seemed appropriate. Fielding (2007) outlined the manner in which the person-centered nature of the work of Principals has been a key contribution to the development of an ongoing discourse on emotions. Indeed, extensive qualitative research (Mills and Niesche, 2014; Brennan and Mac Ruairc, 2011; Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet, 2011; MacBeath, 2011; Gronn, 2009; Kelchtermans, 2007; Beatty, 2007a; Beatty, 2007b) exists that suggests Principals operate within a complex environment of interconnectedness, in which identity is

formed between self, significant others and personal memory. These questions addressed particular themes that emerged from the literature review. For example, some of the questions that the participants were asked were:

- How do Principals maintain good social relations with people in their community?
- What can help a Principal perceive emotions in others?
- Why would intrapersonal intelligence – the ability to understand when and how to use your feelings – be considered important for Principals?
- In the last 3-5 years that you have been a Principal, in what manner has your role evolved?
- When have you experienced tension conflicting ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’?
- Is there a tension between wanting to ‘belong’ to either ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ and loneliness?
- How might seeking collegiality be important to some Principals?
- What role does the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions play in the development of relationships?

A semi-structured approach was utilized for the interview as it allowed room for individual understandings to be further explored. This form of interviewing allowed the researcher and the participant to engage in a dialogue whereby initial questions were modified depending upon the participants’ responses and the researcher probed interesting or important areas that arose. For example, “What does the term ‘emotionally mature’ mean to you?” led to a range of responses. Janet discussed the way in which knowing one’s own emotions and being self-aware was important. However, Phillip responded that an emotionally mature leader was able to have empathy for others and take alternative perspectives. The Principals’ responses were then used to discuss their understandings in greater detail.

By exploring the Principals understandings of emotions at work and the role of emotional intelligence in their daily lives it was thought that helpful strategies for supporting Principals would be identified. The design of this study was to enrich the understandings of emotions, emotional intelligence and the role of context in broadening the discourse centered on leadership.

Sampling: The Recruitment and Selection of Principals

To understand leadership that is reflective of cultural, political and other norms requires a positioning within the constructivist paradigm, which allows the researcher to rely upon the participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2007). As a qualitative researcher I sought to understand how individuals interpret their world. The intention was to explore how these Principals made sense of emotions at work in the course of their daily lives. Given this, the researcher explored the notion of whether experience and context might make different demands of Principal's emotions at work and the role emotional intelligence might play. As such, this study sought to include interviews with participants with various levels of experience. The researcher was then able to tap into a possible diversity of stories to better understand what role, if any, experience played with respect to the understanding of emotional intelligence in the lives of Principals. It might be that an experienced Principal might better understand the emotions at work and how emotional intelligence has assisted them in leading school improvement, whereas the inexperienced Principals who have participated in this study may still be learning to define what emotional intelligence is and how it impacts their leadership approach and the progress that is made at their school.

The participant Principals were invited to participate in this project by email. Six Principals responded. These Principals were not known to me and had no prior relationship with me. The email outlined the theoretical underpinnings and the ultimate objective of the research. The commitment required from each participant was clearly articulated in the email. After the consent forms were returned the participants needed to complete a survey, which formed the basis of the first set of interviews questions. Participants were informed that the survey would take 15 – 20 minutes to complete. After reviewing the survey, the researcher was able to identify varying levels of experience amongst the Principals that might offer a rich understanding of the impact of emotional intelligence in the participating Principals' daily lives.

The email addresses of the Principals were procured from the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority. The VRQA also lists additional details of primary and secondary schools, such as government, Catholic or independent school. Approximately 100 emails were sent to Principals who were employed in varying locations and whose work conditions were varied. Of those approached, only six

Principals responded. This determined the number interviewed, rather than theoretical or design issues. None of the six participants came from a Catholic school. There were 5 participants from state government schools and one came from an independent school. All of the state government school Principals had a co-educational student environment, whilst the independent school respondent came from an all girls' school. The size of each school was varied, with one school in the Outer Eastern suburbs of Melbourne having 122 students whilst an inner city school had experienced significant growth in the time of the Principal and had over 700 enrolments from a low point of 105 a decade ago. The participants were volunteers and wished to share their frustrations and concerns, particularly pertaining to a lack of perceived support.

Of the participants, three were women and three were men. The level of experience amongst these professionals varied, with one Principal having been in the position for less than 12 months when initially responding. Another respondent had been in the position for less than 5 years when completing the survey whilst another Principal had over 11 years experience in that specific role. The remaining three Principals had held their positions between 6 to 10 years.

The Pre-interview Survey

A preliminary survey was created that utilised general statements about the participant's experiences and thoughts on being a Principal. The survey was designed as a means of gaining an understanding of the manner in which Principals dealt with complex social interactions and the emotional intelligences that they felt were needed when supporting various stakeholders in the education process. The survey provided statements on the Principals' experiences in their role. These participants were then able to select a response the best suited their point of view. Establishing which of the respondents had had a mentor when they began their career as a Principal was included due in the survey as a result of findings from the literature search, which had highlighted the importance of mentoring programs in supporting new and inexperienced Principals. The survey also delved into the management of the school and the need to work closely with a variety of people from the community whose needs and wants of a school can, at times, be quite varied. The Principals were asked about their work with staff and the subsequent support given for staff development.

Another important aspect of school management is the relationships formed with parents. Understanding the prior expectations of Principals and the realities of the role formed an important aspect of understanding their experiences. This led to survey statements that explored the emotions that are needed when working closely with staff and parents. Additionally, the literature review informed the survey design as questions were used to explore the changing nature of leadership. Participants were provided with a series of statements that sought to determine whether the support given to them was what they had expected or whether greater support should be offered to Principals who were beginning in the role. Examples of two such statements are:

1. To address the concept of 'identity' – which was explored by Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004) and Kelchtermans (2005) – I provided the statement: I wanted to be respected and accepted by the staff
2. To begin exploring the role of collegiate support (Smith, 2007), I used the statement: I seek support from other Principals who can understand the pressures of this job
3. To understanding the changing nature of leadership, I asked participants to consider this statement: The demands of my position have grown in the time I have been a Principal

Information from the survey was intended to be used as a guide for the interviews, alerting the researcher to differences amongst the participants that might provide rich data. The Pre-Interview Survey is reproduced in Appendix 3.

The Development of the Content Questions used in the Interview

The purpose of an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis for this study was to produce an in-depth examination of the way in which emotions at work and the role of emotional intelligence was understood by this group of Principals rather than generating a theory that could be generalised over a whole population. Exploring the person-centered nature of the work of Principals and the complex environment of interconnectedness that they operate in was achieved through the use of semi-structured interviews.

The framework for developing the interview questions was drawn from the literature review that covered components such as emotions, emotional intelligence, the role of context, increased challenges associated with the role of a Principal and collegiate support to alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation. By designing the interview process with the research and surveys in mind it was hoped that Principals would be given the space to articulate and describe the emotional intelligence required for their position and what, in their view, needed to be done to reduce the gap between what emotional intelligence is required of Leading Teachers and Assistant Principals and of those stepping into the role of being a Principal.

The questions were developed to allow the Principals to portray their emotional intelligence and their reasons for dealing with certain relationships in particular ways. The researcher developed a set of questions that could be loosely defined by the following subheadings:

- Beginning as a Principal

The purpose of these questions was to allow Principals to define their preconceptions of the position before they began their role and what, if any, particular areas of development they would suggest for beginning Principals. This may mean an understanding of emotions, the way in which the job had evolved in their time as a Principal and if, at the start of their career as Principals, there were roles and responsibilities they had not expected.

Some examples of the questions were:

- * Did you have any preconceptions of what it meant to be a Principal? Can you describe some of your expectations?
- * In the last 3-5 years that you have been a Principal, in what manner has your role evolved?

Articulating the major differences between the role of an Assistant Principal and a Principal, was a strategy employed to explore emotions at work and the core emotional intelligences that could be expected in this role. The researcher felt it was important to establish the expectations that a person may have had prior to undertaking the role they currently held as their disappointment may have had a role in influencing their feelings and attitudes towards their work.

- Emotions

Berkovich and Eyal (2015) found that understanding the emotional experiences of Principals and their reaction to the surrounding social reality, which experiences illicit positive and negative emotions, was important in their research. This study will seek to understand what events transpire for Principals to illicit these different emotions by asking:

- What events in your day-to-day work illicit positive emotions?
- Describe an event that may cause a negative reaction.

- Emotional Intelligence

Given the way in which Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004) define emotional intelligence as being the capacity to reason about emotions to enhance thinking, accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (p.197) it was important to ask questions that explored the perceptions Principals had of the skills needed in their day-to-day lives.

After discussing the ability based model of emotional intelligence, some examples of the interview questions were:

- Why would intrapersonal intelligence – the ability to understand when and how to use your feelings – be considered important for Principals?
 - Have you felt any pressure to project a certain image around emotions at work?
 - In what way is self-regulation an important part of being a Principal?
 - How do Principals maintain good social relations with people in their community?
 - What interpersonal qualities assist Principals in achieving better social relations with adults?
 - What can help a Principal perceive emotions in others?
- Changing nature of leadership

The survey results in which Principals laid out their concerns formed a starting point on which to base the interview questions for this aspect of the Principals daily

life. Many of the participants, in their initial survey response, had indicated that they found little time for curriculum and teaching-related tasks.

Riley (2015) found that a high percentage of Principals felt that their role was one of management rather than providing school leadership. Once again, this was a source of frustration and pressure amongst the respondents in the initial survey from this study. Additionally, hiding emotions, offensive behaviour and work-family conflict were also found to have high rates of prevalence for Principals. Given these findings, the researcher felt it was important to understand the day-to-day work of Principals by asking:

- Why would intrapersonal intelligence – the ability to understand when and how to use your feelings – be considered important for Principals?
 - Have you felt any pressure to project a certain image around emotions at work?
 - In what way is self-regulation an important part of being a Principal?
 - When have you experienced tension conflicting ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’?
 - Is there a tension between wanting to ‘belong’ to either ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ and loneliness?
-
- Mentoring

Smith (2007) carried out a project in which Principals voluntarily sought to form a community of skilled learning with Principals from different schools. This initiative provided Principals with the opportunity for active and organised participation in relevant and challenging learning. Sharing professional understandings and their expertise enabled the Principals to contribute in mutually meaningful and beneficial ways that created a sense of belonging and reduced the sense of isolation.

Analysis of the initial survey in this study found that whilst mentoring had benefits for supporting beginning Principals in transitioning into their role, lack of time was thought to compromise its effectiveness. For example, the participants ‘Strongly Agreed’ or ‘Agreed’ that time was a limiting factor when working with a mentor. Therefore, interview questions were framed to consider lack of available time as well as the advantages/disadvantages of mentoring. Some of the questions used to address this aspect of the literature review were:

- How might seeking collegiality be important to some Principals?

- How does mentoring of Principals assist in understanding emotions in varying contexts?
- What role does the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions play in the development of (mentoring) relationships?

The Conduct of the Interviews

With the major questions and sub-questions having been developed from the literature review (see Appendix D), the interview schedule was then produced. After arranging appointment times with the Principals for the initial interview, it was decided to meet Principals at their workplace so that the space in which they answered their questions was both familiar and ensured the participants were at ease. Whilst it was important to ensure that area was quiet and uninterrupted it was apparent this was rarely the case for a Principal.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality each Principal was informed that, in the manuscript, each Principal would be given an alias and other clearly identifying information about them would be omitted from the thesis so that they could not be identified in any way.

In each interview a set of questions had been prepared, however given that the researcher was trying to capture key insights and understandings of each Principal, it was important to maintain flexibility and delve further into particular responses that were offered. Once the interviewee had finished providing a response than supplementary questions or issues were raised. Each initial interview was scheduled for 45 minutes but could last between 30 minutes to an hour. They were recorded and transcribed, using the process outlined earlier in this chapter. In addition to providing a wealth of data, the subsequent listening to and reflecting upon the interviews provided the impetus for the second series of interviews.

Conducted twelve months from the initial interviews, a second interview was arranged. The researcher took this approach to gain a deeper understanding of the Principals' perceptions and understandings of emotions at work and the role of emotional intelligence. During the analysis stage, information from the first and second interviews could be compared to explore whether or not Principals had changed their understandings and, if they had, whether time, support or other factors had played a role in this change of perception. However, a limitation of the study was

that whilst four of the six participants responded to a second interview two participants did not. Additionally, the participants were asked to reconsider their initial thoughts on emotional intelligence and the role it played in their daily lives. The second interview was used to follow up any findings/questions arising from analysis of the first interview's data. Probe questions and statements were used so as to encourage participants within the study to provide additional information and more detail. Using open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview allowed for greater flexibility within the allotted time so that each Principal felt comfortable in elaborating upon particular thoughts and ideas without the feeling of there being any constraints.

In order to demonstrate how the subsequent interviews were conducted, and the manner in which Principals were asked to reexamine their ideas so that in depth data could be collected, one transcript (for respondent Phillip) is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix E.

Analysis of the Data

The intent of the data analysis was to develop an understanding of Principals' perspectives on the emotions at work, what emotional intelligence is required and how Principals cope with the pressure of their day-to-day lives.

The initial stages of analysis involved listening to the audio recording several times as each listening event helped to provide some insights and immersed the researcher in the phenomena being studied. At this stage notes were made about the researcher's observations and reflections from the interview experiences. This assisted in focusing the content, language use, context and initial interpretative comments.

Once the initial set of interviews was transcribed, coding was undertaken so as to gain an understanding of the various perspectives. Coding in chapter 4 was done by categorising information using predetermined (a priori) codes. Categories selected for initial analysis were instructional leadership, transformational leadership, perceptiveness, empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-regard, loneliness, role conflict, work stress, pressure, competing demands, loneliness, mentoring and collegiate groups.

The categories selected for the initial analysis, as represented in Chapter 4, then formed the basis for developing the questions required for the second round of

interviews. This meant that emergent ideas could be explored in greater depth and allowed for greater trustworthiness in the data as the principals responded to the themes that had been identified in the first round of interviews.

Chapter 5 presents a summation of four main themes that emerged from the data analysis of the two sets of interviews. After the interviews had been transcribed and coded for initial themes, a list of themes was created to search for connections that existed across the interviews using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). After careful clarification and analysis the four main themes to emerge from this study were Pressure, Relationships with Others, Relationship with Self and Support and Mentoring.

Initially, a label was assigned to a section of the data by using a key word or short phrase that was reflective of the participants' own words (Given, 2008). The aim was to preserve the participants meaning of their views (Charmaz, 2006) and to ensure that the intentions of the Principals were clearly maintained.

Many of the key words were derived from the literature and this proved useful in looking for emerging themes between the key quotes within and across cases, which were still grounded in the particularity of the specific things that participants said (Smith, J.A., 2007). This process assisted in developing a subsequent set of interview questions for the follow up interviews 12 months later.

In a sense, each Principal was involved in a subsequent analysis of their initial findings during the second interview as they were asked to reflect upon their views of emotions at work and the role of the emotional intelligence. The two Principals who did not participate in their second interview did respond via email to the data analysis of their first interviews. By having a second interview, the opportunity to check for continuity of the respondent's claims was presented and, where variations occurred, respondents were asked why their thinking and perspective had evolved, thus generating richer data. The effect of the first interview in focusing attention on emotional intelligence was also considered.

Once the second set of interviews had been conducted with the participants the process of analysis was replicated. The researcher looked for connections between the emerging themes across the interviews. Bringing together this information it was possible to identify central characteristics and a set of major themes. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, respondent validation was used to ensure the intentions of the Principals were clearly maintained.

The participants in the study were emailed with their quotes from both interviews, as well as the associated themes that the researcher had identified. By soliciting feedback on the emergent themes the researcher was able to rule out the possibility of misinterpretation. This was important in ensuring the participants had the opportunity to respond to what the researcher had perceived them saying and doing. Maxwell (2005) also noted that this strategy for checking the trustworthiness of qualitative data ensured that preliminary analysis and interpretations rang true.

Litchman (2013) suggested that researchers who were involved in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis need to acknowledge that as the researcher is the interpreter of data then making the assumption that an individual can set aside one's own views is fraught with perilous conjecture. By acknowledging the culture, background and gender influences of one's own experiences, authentic reflection may enable us to become aware of our own pre-conceived assumptions about the phenomenon being researched. The researcher used his own background to mitigate his own possible biases in order to mitigate research bias in data collection and analysis of the data.

Having employed strategies to increase the trustworthiness of this data - namely respondent validation - Chapter 4 will draw together the salient points that were confirmed by the respondents. The data in this chapter was categorised using predetermined codes because an a priori methodological approach was taken. The participants were able to recognise their experiences within the interpretation of the themes identified. These themes, in most instances, were also informed by the existing research literature.

Using the interviewees' own words to illustrate how these points were grouped together is intended to enable the reader to assess the pertinence of the interpretation whilst also retaining the voice of the Principals' personal experiences. Each theme has been described, justified and exemplified in Chapters 4 and 5, with extracts from the interviews and analytical comments included so that the interpretative commentary of the researcher is illuminated.

Chapter Four: Initial Data Analysis

Responses to Interviews

This chapter presents participants' responses to the interviews for this study, which explored the perceptions and understandings of Principals towards emotional intelligence and the role emotions played in their daily lives. Semi-structured interview questions were used to gain insights from the participant's experiences.

Once each interview was completed, coding was undertaken with an a priori approach. Chapter 4 explores the research data through this lens as the coding categories were chosen based upon the research literature relevant to this study. The research literature will be mentioned under each heading in this chapter.

The first section introduces each participant so that a point of reference exists for the reader. Pseudonyms have been used to maintain the anonymity of the participants, although it is believed that a contextual glimpse into their school environments helps anchor the research and allows the reader to better understand their experiences as Principals. Their names are Ava, Janet, Nyree, Phillip, Harry and William.

The second section links particular questions to the set of codes used for analysis. Creswell (2007) noted that:

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p.15).

An important component of analyzing interviews is the coding process. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that:

Coding is analysis...Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to "chunks" of varying size – words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting (p. 56).

A summary of the categories has been produced here. The categories have been written in brackets at the end of the relevant quote. Each quote is italicised. The

categories are listed below the headings of this chapter to indicate the different coding categories identified to interpret the responses of the participants:

Principals and Approaches to Leadership

- Transformational leadership
- Instructional leadership

Hallinger (2003) describes transformational leadership approach as having the following key features: individualised support, shared goals, vision, intellectual stimulation, culture building, rewards, high expectations and modelling (p.335 – 336). The instructional model of leadership may emphasise the Principals' directions and the coordination of instruction, however the transformational leadership model places the focus on teachers' motivations and commitment impacting upon instruction and curriculum, thereby influencing student learning outcomes.

Principals' Perspectives on Emotional Intelligence

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004) define emotional intelligence as the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions, to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately *perceive* emotions, to *access and generate emotions* to assist thought, to *understand emotions* and emotional knowledge, and to *reflectively regulate emotions* to promote emotional and intellectual growth (p.197).

The General Effects mentioned in the literature review drew attention to the way in which Principals used emotional intelligence to inform their relationships with themselves and others. Perceptiveness, empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation and self-regard were components of the ability based model of emotional intelligence, often referred to as the MSCEIT model.

- Perceptiveness (perceive emotions)
- Empathy (understand emotions)
- Self-awareness (access and generate emotions)
- Self-regulation (to reflectively regulate emotions)
- Self-regard

Self-regard - meaning the ability to consider oneself - was chosen as a coding category due to the findings of the ability based model of emotional intelligence presented in the literature review regarding better psychological wellbeing. This was

particularly important given the report of Riley (2015), which found that Principals were reporting higher levels of work-family conflict, the need to hide emotions and offensive behaviour in their workplace.

Changing nature of leadership

The research of Riley (2015), who found that Principals experience higher levels of offensive behaviour, the need to hide emotions and work-family conflict, informed this category in identifying themes from the interview. Crawford (2007), Schmidt (2009), Brennan and Mac Ruairc (2011) were some of the other authors that explored the changing nature of leadership in the literature review.

- Role conflict
- Work stress
- Pressure
- Competing demands

The impact of ‘outside’ and ‘inside- school perspectives’

In the literature review Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) document how Principals feel a conflict between loneliness and belonging when the demands of the ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ differ.

- Loneliness

Mentoring

In the literature review Smith (2007) carried out a project in which Principals formed a community of skilled learning with Principals from different schools. This initiative provided opportunities for the sharing of professional understandings and their expertise. This enabled the Principals to contribute in mutually meaningful and beneficial ways that created a sense of belonging and reduced the sense of isolation.

- Mentoring for Beginning Principals
- Collegiate groups for Experienced Principals

The text illustrates how their comments have been sorted under a set of headings that represents the initial analysis. For the most part, these headings reflect the interview questions. This data is presented here to give an overview of the comments made by

participants in this study. The next chapter presents a set of themes derived from these comments, linked to the literature and the research questions, and the final chapter provides a discussion of these themes.

Description of Participants

Six primary school Principals were interviewed. A brief description of each participant has been used to offer some contextualization of their experiences. The details were taken from their initial responses to the survey.

Ava had worked across various schools for 40 years and had been at her current school for 3 years. She'd spent most of those years in the classroom before moving into a Leading Teacher role from 2002 – 2008. In 2010, she began working as a Principal. Ava described the student population of her school as being ethnically mainstream, whilst the socioeconomic base was semi-skilled and skilled workers. Ava was working at a school in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

Janet was nearly in her 40th year of education. She had held leadership positions for almost 2 decades before moving into a Principal position. At the time of the survey, she had been a Principal for over 6 years and was working in her second school in this role. Janet described the students at her school as predominantly middle class, with an increasing number of students coming from Asian countries. The school was located in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne.

Nyree had been in education for 26 years. She acted as a Leading Teacher for 6 years and had been a Principal since 2010 at a school in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Nyree described the students of the school as predominantly middle class, although she described the learning needs of the students as quite varied due to the school having a high percentage of children diagnosed with autism, due to the school having a good reputation for inclusion.

Phillip was in his early 40s at the time of the survey. He had been a classroom teacher for 5 years before moving into various leadership positions, culminating in his role as an Assistant Principal, where his experiences took him overseas for 5 years. He returned to Australia with a young family and had been a Head of Junior School for 1 year. His school is located in the inner-east of Melbourne, with the students coming from skilled, professional families. Phillip described his school as having

historically strong academic results, with an increasingly transient population if parents did not perceive their needs as being met.

Harry had served as Principal for over 6 years. In his 60's, Harry had first come into education 40 years ago. He spent the first 20 years of his career in the classroom before moving into formal leadership positions, such as being a Leading Teacher. At the time of the survey Harry worked at an inner-city school. The demographics for his school were described as semi-skilled workers, with students coming from a wide variety of backgrounds.

William had served as a Principal for 6 years prior to taking up the same position at a school located in Melbourne's western suburbs. The school was described by William as having significant ethnic diversity, along with low socioeconomic levels due to high rates of unemployment.

Approaches to Leadership

This section explores the Principals' perceptions of 'successful' leadership. Their responses addressed aspects of the instructional model, with an emphasis on the Principals' directives and the coordination of instruction. The transformational leadership model was also addressed, with the emphasis on teachers' motivations and innovations, given the focus of this model on the development of the individual professional. Participants' comments were coded according to each style of leadership. Colour coding has been applied according to the category list above.

Transformational Leadership

The transformational leadership approach seeks to foster the capacity and development of staff with a shared focus on values. This, in turn, will lead to higher levels of personal commitment. Both Janet and Harry discussed their approach to leadership as being transformational. Janet stated that:

When I came to this school, it was a fairly *top-down leadership approach*... (Instructional leadership) it was like they had leading teachers at different levels and they directed the whole thing, you'll do it this way. Which is not my preferred way of operating... I prefer the transformational leadership model. If you have the capabilities and will then *I want to encourage that and develop that self-belief in others* (Transformational leadership).

The quote from Janet aligns with the findings of Hallinger (2003) from the literature review as she explains the importance of providing individualised support and shared goals. Harry echoed these thoughts as he explained that he liked to delegate to competent staff who could make important decisions:

If a person wants to be a principal they have to have a strong work ethic and fantastic people skills. And an ability to learn because you can learn the rest. You have to be open-minded to that learning. They need to have empathy and they also need to know how to delegate because they can't do everything. *The best leaders are great at picking their staff and delegating responsibility to those senior staff, allowing them to do things without interfering too much* (Transformational leadership) so as long as it's reviewed at the end of the process. That's the hallmark of a good leader.

Harry identifies the importance of having the capacity to build a vision as a leader and to have the high expectations and modelling that Hallinger (2003) noted.

Instructional Leadership

An instructional leadership approach is considered 'top-down' as Principals delegate duties without the focus on developing individual skills or capacities. Ava discussed an instructional leadership approach that a previous Principal had taken at her school:

When I came here leadership was underground. Staff didn't step up. Staff were inexperienced and *they'd never been given the opportunity to step up and lead.* (Instructional leadership) *They've never had someone empower them and say, 'You can do this, give it a go and if you need me I am here.'* (Transformational leadership)

For Ava, it was important to have high expectations of staff so that a culture of shared goals and empowerment could be developed, key qualities that were identified by Hallinger (2003). When she began her role, Ava explained that:

I tried that [transformational leadership] and it all went belly up but *I've tried to continue and kindle that capacity to lead*

(Transformational leadership) by planting seeds, by doing my very best in the time that I have, in between everything else.

Janet explained how developing the capacity amongst her staff can be difficult as an instructional leadership approach can offer more control:

I find it very hard not to have the top-down leadership approach. There is a lot of tension. It's a bit me being a bit of a control freak and I feel like what I want to know. At the moment, I feel like I am losing a bit of control, not control, but, you know, some people are doing things that I don't know. I am thinking, gosh, I need to know a bit more about that. (Instructional leadership) As someone said to me, the mark of a good leader is doing yourself out of a job. I should be able to leave and the school should just keep humming.

Ava and Janet highlighted the difficulty in creating a shared vision whereby individual support and goals could be used to develop the culture of the school. There is a tension between a transformational leadership approach and the instructional model of leadership. Hallinger (2003) noted that the instructional model of leadership may emphasise the Principals' directions and the coordination of instruction, referred to by Janet in this interview.

The Principals within this study noted that their choice of leadership models required some thought be given to the context in which they were situated. How the context influenced the choice of leadership model is discussed next. Participants talked about the manner in which the emotions of their staff can influence their choice of leadership style. Phillip explained that he had to be flexible in his decision-making process:

When you're thrust into a situation that you don't expect – which pretty much happens every day – you've got to be flexible. I have to understand that my leadership style isn't a one size fits all. I mean, for a person that has been here for 15 years and if I compare that to a new teacher, then *I need to be adaptable and approach those conversations differently.* (Transformational leadership) My leadership style might be quite different.

Phillip further explained that each staff member responded differently and that Principals needed to understand their staff to implement any type of leadership style

effectively. This, he felt, varied depending upon the situation in which he found himself:

I can work out where I need to push, where I need to listen and where I just need to offer support. Some staff I feel like... I don't know if this is the right term... but *I can push them and they'll respond positively but if I asked the same thing of say Tim and Thomas then they'd become overwhelmed and feel pressure.* (Competing demands) And that would then impact everyone else as they sat down during recess and lunch to chat.

These quotes from Phillip indicate that contextual and relational understandings are important when considering any discussion around an emotionally intelligent leader. In the literature review Berkovich and Eyal (2015) and Schmidt (2000) noted that emotions are contextualised, political and relational so emotions needs to be seen as more than the expression of individual psychological attributes.

William added further understandings to the role of contextual and relational understandings when he noted that the emotions of others play a part in knowing what to set out and try to achieve as a Principal:

So many of the staff were on Workcover when I got here. There was a need to build staff resilience and build a picture of what this school was going to be... it was building a vision for the teachers of what the place was going to be like. *I thought it would turnaround a lot faster than it did.* (Pressure)

These comments are reflective of what Blackmore (2013) refers to as the emotional management work of leadership. In addition to being sensitive to one's own emotions and how they are displayed, there is also a need to be conscious of the emotional economy of the organisation. The next section explores the way in which pressure is a component of a Principals' emotions at work.

Changing nature of leadership

This section relates to the emotions that Principals experience at work. Blackmore (2013) highlighted the way in which Principals understood who they were through the way they experienced their environments. The participants in this study highlighted the way in which their concerns about their role stemmed not only from work intensification but also significant contextual factors.

For example, Phillip noted that there were multiple aspects to the term ‘pressure’:

Being an all girls’ school, and being the first male Head of Junior School, I feel there is an added pressure. Definitely. Definitely to start off with... *I am looking at it from a parent perspective, more so from staff perspective I suppose, I guess I don’t feel as much pressure from the staff. But from the parents... well, I do feel that pressure.* I’m going to have added pressure, *people looking at me*, because I am male, I am at an elite girls’ school, so I think those *pressures and expectations* and knowing girls’ education is going to be really important for me. (Work stress)

He referred to the idea of being under the surveillance of teachers and staff; the pressure of managing the tension between being a male principal at a girls’ school and the pressure of perform to his own expectations. The quote from Phillip supports the assertion by Berkovich and Eyal (2015), who noted that emotions are contextualized, political and relational.

Nyree found that the history and culture of her school lead to unexpected pressures. She recalled:

The history of this school is that they’d had 7 Principals in 10 years *so they hadn’t had anybody here in a long time who had been here for more than 2 years.* (Pressure) The parents referred to it as a stepping stone school. People just apply to get a job and then they’d apply to a bigger school. I think the teachers did a good job of just keeping things going because when a new Principal came along they didn’t how long they’d be there.

For William, the complicated history of his current school meant that pressure derived from the lack of trust. He felt that the relationships between staff, parents and children were all inextricably linked and, consequently added pressure. He stated that:

It’s all intertwined. *The Principals weren’t staying at this school because of the parents and parents weren’t trusting the principals as they didn’t stay.* (Work stress) The kids’ behaviour was average because there was not a lot of ... the figures were transient. They knew that the person they’d be answering to would probably be gone in a few months.

The quotes from William, Nyree and Phillip align with the findings of Riley (2015), who found that Principals experience higher levels of offensive behaviour and the need to hide emotions when dealing with conflict amongst colleagues. This form of ‘pressure’ was also highlighted by Harry, who noted an ‘inside-school perspective’ - that of working with incompetent staff - offers the greatest stress to his wellbeing:

My biggest stresses are having incompetent staff and I have an incompetent staff member who has been here since 1983. (Pressure)
I’ve been here for 13 years and I’ve been trying to get rid of him for many years. His wife is a retired teacher so every time he gets put on performance management she does his work programs for him, sets his room up. And after 3 months he reaches his targets and 12 months later back it goes again.

The pressure that was derived from a lack of support from staff was an experience shared by Phillip, who noted that pressure can come from having to frequently compromise on various matters:

You have to build a relationship with someone like the business manager, but it’s hard to do that if they are not going to support you. (Pressure) In this line of business ... well I think you have to gather your data, you have to gather your reasons. I have to build up a consensus and persuade others that we can do what we want to do so that there is less, well hopefully, to compromise on.

There was a heavy emphasis in these interviews on the notion that an individual is required to lead change, rather than collective action being at the forefront of the thinking. The emotional economy (Blackmore, 2013) of the schools was significant in determining the wellbeing of the community and the establishment of trust, which leadership relies upon.

As a beginning Principal, Ava felt some pressure when there was a perceived lack of support for policies that she was prepared to implement:

I did [feel pressure]. And it was made very clear. I had no trouble with that because we are a government school and we are ... we are mandated to deliver a government school curriculum and report against government standards, so I didn’t have any issues with that.
I do have some issues with the WAY the department expected me to

do that and the level of support I was given to do it, (Competing demands) which was minimal if not, you know ...

Ava's comments suggest that department policy was placing too much emphasis on individual leaders, along with a lack of support. This reflects Blackmore's (2013) comments, that with the intensification of work and an increasing pressure for Principals to work within managerial and corporate cultures, leadership is becoming more individualized.

Pressure can also derive from issues around policy implementation. Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) explored the 'outside-school perspective' and the way in which policymakers, whilst not directly influencing the school on a day-to-day basis, often appear in roles that address legal or administration rules, procedures and demands. The complications of their decision-making emerged from the interviews as several of the participants discussed how this 'outside-school perspective' contributed to their sense of loneliness and pressure.

The decision by policy makers to allocate certain leadership positions resulted in pressure for Principals of small schools. In her interview, Nyree noted that she was unable to have an Assistant Principal due to the size of her school. She made an important connection between the possible support that an Assistant Principal could provide:

Sometimes you think you are doing it the right way but you just need that reassurance that you are, (Pressure) that you've got nothing to worry about, so I contacted the union. And maybe because I don't have an Assistant Principal or a Leading Teacher I have difficulty letting go of it [issues that cause pressure and stress], perhaps because I don't have anyone else I can really talk to about it. That is a challenge that principals in bigger schools may not have. (Work stress)

Ava commented that the lack of a leadership support team exacerbated the pressure she felt:

*My partner, my partner cops it. And that's a limited conversation because she's not a teacher and you go home and it's *scream* and that person will listen and they'll help you through that but, you know, my partner's wonderful, but you know at the end of the day it's not fair and because I don't have an AP, I don't have a school*

leadership team that I can talk to about those sorts of things with, well no one cares. (Pressure)

These comments indicate that Ava does find the balance between work-family conflict, which Riley (2015) indicated had a higher rate of prevalence amongst Principals than the general community. Phillip knew that the policy of his school did not allow for a Deputy Head of Junior School to be put in place. Like Ava, he alleviated his stress by chatting to a spouse with little background information of the day-to-day challenges of his role:

...the first experiences were, I guess for me, and I haven't got a deputy as well... so I think I was learning to do that a lot more to be honest because the first couple [conflicts] I just took so personally I thought 'Oh shit.' (Pressure) Drive home, great, talk to my wife, great but then you sort of come back and you've got the four walls again (Pressure) and you've sort of got to start afresh again. And that was difficult. So, I still do that now...

Although Phillip, like Ava, sought support at home it did little to alleviate the frustration and pressure that they felt in leading their schools. As Riley (2015) indicated, Phillip and Ava are not alone in feeling this way.

There is also the matter of pressure that is derived from a conflict between 'outside-' and 'inside-school perspectives'. Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) and Schmidt (2009) explored the demands and expectations that occur from these differing perspectives and how they can come into conflict. The Principal is expected to deal with competing demands and react to these pressures and the responses of the Principals describe the emotional toll these competing demands create. Ava noted that being a manager of change, in which the mandate from the Department of Education and Training comes into conflict with the intentions of the staff, becomes emotionally taxing:

I have had teachers come in here, bang their fist on the table and tell me that they don't have to do what I have asked them to do (Pressure) because they are a Cadbury teacher and I have sat there calmly said "Actually, you do because the government pays your wages, they expect you to be professional in your work (Inside-outside school perspectives) and being a professional doesn't mean that you please yourself." Being professional means that you work

for the good of the system that you work within and if you don't like that system there are lots of other systems out there that you can go to, so shape up or ship out! And I've that had with many teachers and I've had teachers in tears and I've had teachers shouting at me. And that's not pleasant either, let me tell you. (Competing demands)

In the literature review, Riley (2015) noted that Principals were reporting higher levels of offensive behaviour in their workplace than the general population. It may be that Principals, when faced with competing demands, are confronted by their staff. William, in beginning his role as Principal at a new school, had a similar experience to Ava. The mandate he had been given by the Department of Education and Training came into conflict with the culture and direction that had existed with the parents up until that point. Upon taking up this position, William knew that:

There was the need for dogged determination, that nothing was going to make [the culture of the school] change and that I was under a fair bit of duress for a few months. (Pressure)

Ava offered insights into the tensions that exist between being responsible to the staff whilst also being responsible to the Department of Education and Training. Bamber et. al. (2014) explored the idea that Lean ideas are being adapted from manufacturing contexts to industries such as education so that services can be provided in an efficient and effective way. Staff reductions are commonly associated with Lean ideas and Ava recounted the emotional toll this can have:

There was pressure from the department to wind back some contracts of staff. I started in April, by June I told my first person that their contract had ended. Not an easy thing to do. Made me feel sick. I had no idea how to manage that. I felt sick, I still do... it was the most confronting moment in my career, to tell someone they didn't have a job. It impacts upon their life. I am changing the direction of somebody's life. That was not lost on me. And I felt terrible about that. (Pressure) I realised there were some things that I had to tell myself, some clear messages, that I had... I ... I just... had to deliver... to give... to myself permission to move on from that.

A regular pressure occurs when ‘outside’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ come into conflict with one another over a child’s learning. This was found to be the case in the research by Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) as Phillip explained that:

I think I am learning a lot more with the parent stuff, that the parent stuff I can get a good outcome by just talking through the issue... obviously depending on what the issue is I will try and work out very quickly if it a major issue or a bit of a minor issue that they need to have their ego stroked or whatever. Um... but I am always of the view that I’m very... that my leadership style is very open, that I will... *if I have a parent come in that has a problem with a particular teacher* (Inside-outside school perspective) then I will tell the teacher that this parent has come to me and *I will never get to the situation where the teacher doesn’t know that the parent has come in* (Pressure) and that they are really annoyed or pissed off at something. I think that’s part of my job, to give them that feedback and to be communicative.

The term stress might also be used to convey feelings of pressure. The Principals mentioned the word ‘stress’ many times over the course of the interviews. In his initial interview, Harry warned:

This job is *an extremely stressful job*. (Pressure) I’ve got my sports and my running and I find that de-stressing. I know when I have had too much stress, *I get chest pain and involuntary twitching in my face so I know I need to go for a run*. (Pressure)

Harry’s perceptions on the pressure and stress were encapsulated in his observations on his personal life. Harry lamented:

Being a Principal is not healthy to family life and... I don’t know if my family would still be together if I hadn’t taken on this job but there would have been a much better chance (Pressure). I get enormous job satisfaction and you have to weigh up what is more important... I am not sure if I made the right call or not.

In the research by Riley (2015) there was a trend emerging that work-family conflict had a higher rate of prevalence for Principals. The quote from Harry – as well as Ava and Phillip earlier in this chapter – indicate this is an issue for Principals. However, this conflict is not confined only to the work-family dynamic as Phillip found the

stress of being a Principal impacted upon the relationships he had established with others. He felt that his personal relationships had been compromised:

I work closely with Rhonda, our receptionist, and I think I was getting a little bit negative towards the end of last year. It was, again, *another issue with another family that was giving me a lot of angst* (Pressure) and I think, on reflection now, I was just reflecting on the holiday last week, that I was really getting into a negative state about this particular family and what they were doing and what they were saying about me. And *for the very first time, towards the end, it really got to me, right in the last two weeks.* (Pressure) And everything Rhonda did, every time Rhonda would put another family's name in the book and they wanted a meeting with you... and I just, you know, *I was just getting really negative. I was just... AAARRGGGHHH,* (Pressure) not another, you know, and I think she was picking up on it as well. She would say "I'm just so sorry, another family wants to...." *AAARRRRGGGHHHH.* So really, *it got the better of me in the end, to be quite honest. It was quite negative...* (Pressure)

In her interview, Janet expressed a sense of caution, noting that although the role of a Principal may feel stressful it was important not to seek the support of staff as a coping mechanism:

...not to have my guard down and, I guess, *being careful about socialising... um... with staff. Since I have been in the Principal role I have never made friends with people on staff... there is a danger.* (Loneliness) People would see that you've got favourites or that you really get on well with so and so. People might ask "What are they talking about?" You have to be really mindful of that.

The inability to handle stress is something that Phillip acknowledged influenced his relationships with others:

Yeah, yeah.... I don't know whether the other staff picked up on it... and realised that I was getting so... quite negative towards the end. Yeah, but I think I need to be really mindful of that next year because with the reports and all the other problems that Rhonda was going through... I need to do that better, I need to manage that more

effectively. I just wasn't helping. *I need to stay more composed and deal with any distress better.* (Pressure)

The impact of stress may also impact upon the relational practice between Principals, parents and staff. Many researchers (Brennan and Mac Ruairc, 2011; Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet, 2011; MacBeath, 2011; Gronn, 2009; Kelchtermans, 2007) have explored the importance of emotional intelligence in building positive relationships with parents and staff. Phillip explained that Principals needed to carefully consider the emotions of their community:

If I can be at the same level as my staff, and the parents too I guess, then I can read people more readily and, hopefully, they might... um... well they could open up more. (Perceptiveness) I hope staff see me as still an educator, I can get to know people in the community if I don't sit behind a table as the big head honcho.

This was a view substantiated by Harry, who reiterated the importance of relating to different stakeholders:

For a Principal, it's about the ability to relate to all sections of the community in a positive way, to present themselves in a positive way and the school and the community in a positive way.

Janet acknowledged the importance of positive interactions with the community if a Principal wanted to achieve progress. She said that:

It's a people profession we are in. I mean yes, we do a lot of administration but to me the people side of it is the most important. If you don't get that right then none of the other stuff is going to happen. *And to deal with people you need good emotional intelligence, otherwise you're not going to have positive interactions.* (Perceptiveness)

Knowing the situations and emotional states of staff and parents help inform the interactions and choices Principals make on a daily basis but this is an area of complex behaviours, as Phillip conceded:

The biggest thing though is being able to communicate, it's wanting to communicate across different age groups, different IQ levels, different communication strategies when addressing males compared to females... *being able to relate to people is so*

important. And you've got to, not manipulate, but work with those people as effectively as possible. (Perceptiveness)

Pressure created by different perceived cultural values emerged in the discussions with Janet, who felt pressure due to the importance placed on the academic results contained within data:

MySchool and the comparison of other schools in the area causes a bit of angst and frustration. It does put pressure on teaching and learning, the data is really important... (Pressure)

For Janet, this has meant that:

The teachers have got much better at analysing data and looking at where children need to go and how to support them. There is a pressure to perform. (Pressure)

In the literature review, Blackmore (2011) argued that emotional intelligence is a flawed theory as it focuses on the leader as an individual and the capacities, skills or attributes they have. The quotes from Janet suggest that the contextual and situated relationships around the Principals work should not remain ignored, particularly if being a Principal is considered as a 'people profession'. However, this need to 'perform' against measureable standards has meant that working with the community can be a challenge. Rather than transforming social and political relationships through a holistic approach, there is great pressure to have data of a high standard. Janet laments:

It can frustrate me that a holistic approach isn't being taken by parents because a school is a whole lot more than its data. (Pressure)

Janet's comments illustrate Blackmore's (2013) point that current leadership models reinvest in the individual rather than the relational, which has led to a competitive marketplace in which gaining a competitive advantage is key. Rather than considering 'failing schools' as an issue, Blackmore suggests that a consideration of context is vital and there should be instead a focus on systems or policies that fail. Although the contexts varied amongst the Principals of this study, Ava's comment encapsulated their thoughts. She explained:

Schools aren't about curriculum, they are about people. You've got to get them in the right frame of mind. (Perceptiveness) Whether its

staff, the parents or the kids nothing works unless the relationships are right.

The next section explores Principals' perspectives on emotional intelligence and how certain aspects assist them in coping with the emotional labour of their role.

Principals' Perspectives on Emotional Intelligence

In this section, the Principals' perceptions of emotional intelligence are explored. The interviews were coded within categories that included the emotional intelligence models outlined in the literature review chapter. The coding categories chosen from this literature were perceptiveness, empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation and self-regard and they were taken from the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (2004, 2008).

Perceptiveness

One of the categories of analysis employed in this study is 'perceptiveness'. The General Effects mentioned in the literature review drew attention to the way in which Principals used emotional intelligence to inform their relationships with themselves and others. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2008) found that perceiving emotions, using ideas of perceptiveness and understanding the feelings of others was a component of emotional intelligence so it was selected as a useful category for the first analysis.

Janet provided the first example of a Principal who notes that the success of her role rests upon her ability to recognise and respond to the emotions of her staff. She noted that reading people's feelings accurately from their facial expressions was an important ability in her job:

I'm able to read people's expressions quite well, I think, and I can sort of infer how they feel when I've said something to them.

(Perceptiveness)

Harry elaborated on the way in which perceptiveness connects with body language:

When working with staff you need to pick up on cues, you need to read body language (Perceptiveness) sometimes, based on what they're saying and how they are saying it. I can get a sense of how they are feeling when they talk about something. Principals need to

be able to gauge what is being said without it actually being said.

(Perceptiveness)

Nyree spoke about the importance of looking for emotional cues so that she could relate to parents in her community:

With parents in particular, you have to think very quickly on your feet. Until they walk in the door you don't even usually know what it's about. *I can usually pick whether they are happy or not once I see them and read their faces or the way they are walking.*

(Perceptiveness)

For Ava, observation of others was an important facet of decision-making. She explored the way in which perceiving someone's state of wellbeing can lead to earlier management of potential problems from within her parenting community.

There is a level of emotional incapacity from some parents. A large part of my job, particularly in this community more so than any other community I've taught in, is to have my emotional antennae up all the time. *If you see somebody with a glum face you know you've got to act on it straight away...* (Perceptiveness)

Once a Principal has perceived the emotions of others, some of the participants acknowledged that it was important to use this information in making decisions. Understanding when to push and when to support parents and staff members is a complex aspect of a Principals' day-to-day role. Harry noted that once he understood how the staff felt this informed his day-to-day actions:

Good news can be delivered at any time. You know, extra planning time, pay rises and all that stuff. But I know that a teachers' need... or perhaps it's timing, I don't know, is different to a Principals. *When staff are upbeat and there's energy I might introduce new ideas or things like a staff review but when reports are occurring, or when staff are moaning about having a meeting then I know that I need to ease up a bit.* (Perceptiveness)

Phillip perceived 'emotional maturity' as being related to an interpersonal emotional intelligence:

... a distinct understanding of others. It's important to try and follow different, or I guess a better word is to understand, different perspectives and this particular instance was as a result of poor

communication. *It's important to listen to parents, and those outside influences, so that they feel as though they are being heard and that difficult issues can be sorted out.* (Inside-outside school perspectives) Sometimes it is very uncomfortable... I guess that's the right word.

Empathy

The role that empathy plays in people employing emotional intelligence is emphasized in the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (2004). All of the participants in this study felt that empathy was an important aspect of emotional intelligence.

They believed that empathy could aid Principals in effective decision-making, as Ava explains:

Emotional intelligence is being able to *put myself in some else's position and think about how they feel in a situation.* (Empathy) I suppose that is important. How would I feel if this was my child? What would I do? And I often say to them 'If I was in your position I would... I would like to see... How do you feel about that? Is there anything else you'd like us to have a go at? Let's talk about how we might do that together. What part do you play? What part do I play?'

Nyree mentioned that Principals' need to exercise empathy, calmness and self-regulation when trying to understand the emotions of others:

Look at it from a parents' point of view. (Empathy) All they're doing is ringing you because they are upset about something that has happened to their child, so empathy... just trying to listen to what they (the parents) are saying. *Don't react to anything they are saying, and that's the tricky bit.* (Self-regulation) Don't react to it, say 'I hear what you are saying, I'll follow it through' and get back to them.

In the literature review, the assertion that emotions are relevant to understanding educational leaders was made by Berkovich and Eyal (2015). They found that understanding the emotional experiences of Principals and their reaction to the

surrounding social reality, which experiences illicit positive and negative emotions, was important. The quote from Nyree indicates that Principals do react to the surrounding social reality.

Harry expanded on the role of empathy, as he expressed the important role it plays in being able to care for the participants within the community:

The most important thing was that the Principal has people skills that they have *empathy for who they are going to deal with. If they can't then there is no point having them in the job. They've got to care for the kids, for the families and for the community.* (Empathy)

Janet spoke about the need to understand that people are different and to have people communicate:

All staff have different personalities and get precious about different things, upset, offended or something. (Perceptiveness) There was a situation where a person was changing teams and there were some concerns about her leadership. We just had to sit down and there were some tears and all that but when we had the chat they were able to resolve the issues. I just had to get them communicating so that any problems were out in the open.

Phillip added that emotional intelligence was about being able to understand others:

If parents come to you with an issue, or even a staff member you know, then well I know that I've got to run alongside them and dissect that problem. (Empathy) Then we can come up with a clear sort of idea to solve that particular issue.

In the literature review Blackmore (2011) and Zorn and Boler (2007) argued that professional development for Principals needed to address the deep emotions of empathy, compassion and care, fear, anger and resentment. The Principals in this study acknowledged the importance of having empathy for others and the role compassion can play in a variety of contexts.

Self-awareness

Retna (2011) found that school leaders stressed a strong need for self-reflexivity. In her study, Principals were prepared to engage in a continuous conversation with their inner self. They said that personal improvement and continuous learning was

important in being able to act as an effective school manager. Personal improvement and continuous learning are enhanced by self-awareness, as Janet elaborated on her own understanding of herself:

I think you have to have a degree of emotional intelligence in the role before you come into the role. I think, look, I think we learn all of the time because every situation we deal with is a little bit different. You know, there are different personalities. Just because you have emotional intelligence doesn't mean you're going to be able to deal with problems really well, but it does mean that you have some understanding of yourself, self-awareness, you know, and how you operate and all that sort of thing. I believe you have to have some emotional intelligence. (Self-awareness)

She further elaborated on this point in her interviews:

A Principal needs to have good interpersonal skills, I think that's really important. Good emotional intelligence because a lot of the technical ... a lot of stuff you can learn but you can't always, um, learn that emotional intelligence, interpersonal skill stuff. I mean none of us are perfect but you've got to have reasonable self-awareness too. *You've got to have reasonable self-awareness I think, and also the ability to admit if you are wrong too like, not, 'I've got all the answers.'* (Self-awareness) Someone who is willing to learn, um, someone who is passionate, enthusiastic about what they are going to be doing.

Having an awareness of one's self was important to Harry as it meant being able to seek support:

Principals need to know there is nothing wrong with admitting you don't know everything ... I've been a principal for 13 years and there are still things I don't know. If you don't ask ... a lot of people take it as a sign of weakness to ask. It's a sign of common sense to ask, it shows you are aware of your own strengths and weaknesses. (Self-awareness)

Janet indicated that she needed to be able to recognise and understand her own emotions on a day-to-day basis. She discussed the need for Principals to have well developed intrapersonal skills:

To be aware of your own emotions and really self-aware of when you react to something and why you are reacting ... what is it that's triggering that in me? Why am I reacting like that? Is it something in me or is it something in the other person? And it's kind of understanding whether it's you or other stuff that's getting in the way ... (Self-awareness) it's also being prepared to say I got it wrong.

She elaborated on this further:

You get a lot of stuff coming at you. It doesn't matter if it's a parent, a child, a teacher or stuff coming from the Department that you don't want to particularly do ... *my self-awareness comes into that because you really do need emotional regulation too.* (Self-awareness) There are lots of time inside where you'd be "I'd really to snap their head off, I really want to fly off the handle!" but you go out and you're just really calm. And that's a skill that you really learn... well I think, I think you've either got it or not but sometimes you do, you do have to learn it.

In the literature review, one of the conditions of emotional intelligence, as defined by Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004), is the need to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (p.197). However, the quote from Janet indicates that the regulation of emotion has more to do with positive outcomes within a conflict.

Janet examined how self-awareness could help with future emotional regulation:

That you have a self-awareness about your actions, you think "Ok, I am starting to react so let's take a deep breath and stop. Don't do it." You have to adapt to a whole range of situations and you often have to think quickly on your feet. You have to respond to people and be flexible for different people and not get frustrated by it. (Self-awareness)

Janet has developed her emotional self-awareness as she noted that visualisation was a strategy that she had developed in coping with pressure:

If there is a problem even talking it through in my head, the visualisation, I think that can help. Taking that time can remove any

tension or emotion for me, (Self-regulation) I can think clearly, I know how I am going to react.

In her second interview, Janet noted that she had wanted to develop additional self-help strategies in the intervening period. As a result, she had begun to use self-talk to help her.

I often say to myself "I've got to keep this in perspective." This is a small proportion. (Self-awareness) There are 95% of parents out there who are happy. These parents are not happy. They are causing me a whole lot of angst, a whole lot of, you know, sleepless nights or stress or whatever.

The ability to develop empathy, compassion and care requires a willingness to engage in a 'pedagogy of discomfort' (Blackmore, 2011). This approach would require leaders to address their professional and personal identities and Janet displayed an ability to engage in this:

I do have time to reflect sometimes, particularly in challenging situations where someone or something has had a go at me, you know, or complained about me... I take time to reflect. *Was it their stuff or was it my stuff?* (Self-awareness)

She believed that self-reflection required emotional intelligence:

It comes with experience, but you've got to have the emotional intelligence to reflect on it and take that step back. It's like if a parent comes in and is really angry at you, or with kids too, and you fly back at them then it just keeps going and it escalates. *Whereas if you can sit back and kind of reflect, and listen, and all of that then it is much better.* (Self-regulation) If you reacted to everything you'd have a whole lot of issues.

In a later interview, Janet explained how reflection was essentially a learning experience:

For those situations that don't end well, you need to reflect and learn from it. (Self-awareness) And that's the other thing too, of being open to learning about your emotional intelligence too. I think sometimes it's about changing your mindset, it's about having a growth mindset. It's not being too hard on yourself.

Smith (2007) found that Principals had little time to reflect on their own emotions and to develop a sense of self. Whilst the principals acknowledged that reflection was important, it emerged that time constraints placed a significant constraint on doing so. For example, Phillip noted that spending time to understand his own feelings was not a priority due to time constraints:

Yeah, less so. Because my family is still young I want to get home early... it's probably on the drive home. Cause some days I leave here and I'm going through everything that happened throughout the day and somehow, I get home. So, half an hour later... wow, how did I get home. So, I guess... I guess that's an important part of that, I guess. *And then I've wound down enough to, you know, interact positively with the four of them and my wife* (Self-awareness) and ... yeah, gee, there were some days there that were tough.

For a beginning Principal like Phillip, he is engaging in a 'pedagogy of discomfort' (Blackmore, 2011) as he addresses his professional and personal identities. However, using his time to engage in this reflection whilst in the car was shared by William:

The chance to reflect is important, and it's hard during the day, so really, I will do it in the car on the drive home. *It gives me a chance to think about what went well, what would I do differently, is there something I need to follow up tomorrow because I could have handled it better.* (Self-awareness)

By acknowledging the constraints of time, William noted that the ability to reflect and question his actions that day, could only take place in his car. Can a personal and professional identity truly be developed and refined in such a space?

The importance of developing self-awareness through reflection was further exemplified by Janet, who noted that it was important in reaching conclusions:

Sometimes I've been caught off guard and I've reacted to things and thought *'Ah, shivers, I shouldn't have done that, I should've maintained my cool.'* (Self-awareness) When I say you shouldn't react I know I am going to react but you need to be reasonably level headed about it. You've got to maintain your cool, but sometimes it's a fine line.

This was a view shared by Nyree, who explained that it was only through reflection that she developed the skills to deal with conflict. Now, by making a conscious effort

to apply a strategy she has developed, Nyree notes that her ability to reflect has taught her to:

... just listen, I don't interrupt. I let them finish their rant.

(Perceptiveness) I'd say, 'Let me get this straight, this is what you're saying, this is what you're upset about.'

Riley (2015), who found that Principals were reporting higher levels of behaviour in their workplace and the need to hide emotions, aligns with some of the experiences of Principals in this study. As noted by Blackmore (2011), Principals need to address their professional and personal identities. The interviews indicate that this occurs in an unstructured manner for many Principals, such as the drive home from work.

Self-regulation

The Mayer - Salovey - Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) provides a set of emotional problem-solving tasks that explores the management of feelings, including the ability to understand when and how to use your feelings and helping others to use theirs appropriately (Jones and Hutchins, 2004).

This coding category is important though as critics of emotional intelligence, such as Sachs and Blackmore (1998), believe definitions of emotional intelligence helps people to manage their emotions in socially acceptable and appropriate ways but without proper consideration given to context. They suggest that the emotional intelligence model serves to regulate emotions.

When transcribing these interviews, it emerged that the participants had had experience with having to manage their emotional reactions in trying circumstances and had found self-regulation to be an important trait when discussing their emotions at work. Nyree, for example, explained how emotional intelligence went beyond empathy and linked self-regulation to self-awareness in her comments:

Emotional intelligence is having a self-awareness of yourself. I can control them [my emotions] (Self-regulation) so that people can't see that they are affecting me because I know parents are coming in angry because they are worried about their child. They're not probably angry at me but they are concerned enough about their child that some people can be really, really scary.

Concerning a different event, Nyree discussed self-regulation in greater detail:

Sometimes you get a parent who is so upset, so, so, so upset – I remember one time a parent came in and cleared everything off my desk. They just tossed everything onto the ground! She was furious and *my blood was boiling too but you know, I had to calm myself down.* (Self-regulation) I let her get that out of her system and then I just agreed with her and said, “I’d be mad too!” and “Let’s work this out together!” Eventually we both sat down and had a conversation but boy oh boy was that tough.

Self-regulation appears to be vitally important, given the findings of Riley (2015). His research found that Principals, more than any other profession, dealt with offensive behaviour. An awareness of personal emotions when dealing with conflict, and the manner in which they influence leadership practice, was discussed by Janet:

You definitely need to regulate emotions because if someone has a go at you, a parent, a child or a staff member, there is not much point at having a go back at them. *It is important to try and stay calm and use your control.* (Self-regulation)

Through her experiences as a Principal Nyree had developed her knowledge of the need for self-regulation and analytical thinking:

I listen, I take on board the information and I mull it over. (Self-regulation) I might have a sleepless night but I don’t rush into any decisions. *It is important to be analytical, to take a step back.* (Self-regulation) You do have to step back and say “Right, this is what happened or this is what I think to think about, pros, cons etc.”

The ability to pause and reflect was not always a skill that Nyree felt she had, as she added:

I’ve learnt so much of this in 5 years as an AP and 3 years as a Principal.

William felt that self-regulation was also important and, for him, this involved the use of a physical space. William explained how emotions, such as annoyance, can result in him needing space:

I think I hold my emotions in quite well and that they don’t impact on the decisions I have to make. Look, if I know that something is pissing me off then *I will close my door or stay away from the*

lunchroom for a little while. I can just take a few minutes to gather my thoughts and think about the best thing to do. (Self-regulation)

Displaying emotions was another aspect of self-regulation that emerged through the interviews as the principals discussed whether they needed be able to open express their feelings, both verbally and nonverbally. Only one Principal acknowledged a preparedness to do so and felt it was important.

In engaging others on the journey to develop a school vision, Ava explained how expressing her feelings assisted her in engaging the staff:

My clear intention is to engage us all in a journey of learning, I can't do it on my own, I can only do it with you and I am very willing. The way I have presented myself from the very start is belly up. *I show my weaknesses, I show my foibles, I show my emotions and I state the truth. (Self-awareness)*

In a later interview, she explained:

By being belly up, and I mean by being vulnerable and saying that I don't get something and having others explain it to me, I think that kind of approach has created a kind of a bond, *I don't know that it's a strong personal friendship, but it's certainly a good professional bond (Perceptiveness)* that enables us to work together to find solutions and I think any school is a place where the challenges are always there, the solutions always have to be found and sometimes quite creatively but in this particular context.. there is... there is a tension that exists between what I would call the educational face and the community face.

Ava believed being able to express her feelings was important as:

When I say, I show my emotions I don't mean that I lose it. I don't mean that at all. What I mean is I state the way I feel, I talk openly, I talk about my feelings all the time, sometimes it's sadness, sometimes it's absolute joy. Sometimes it's, you know, totally perplexed about something. In creating relationships with people that work I think people need to see you as human and it's something I believe strongly. Sometimes they see your strengths and sometimes they see your weaknesses and if you've got their trust then sometimes they support your weaknesses.

However, Janet urged self-regulation when expressing emotion, particularly as it pertains to frustrations that may exist:

You get frustrated with people but *you have to learn how to manage it in a different way. Not being too hard on yourself*, (Self-awareness) and also understanding and not expecting that everyone is going to interact with you the same way and being prepared for that and being a bit flexible, and reflecting on your emotional intelligence.

Given this different perspective between Ava and Janet, the idea of forming a personal and professional identity as noted by Blackmore (2011), takes on greater importance. Principals need to address their professional and personal identities. Having this awareness of one's own reactions to an event could inform decision-making, which was a view held by another Principal. Nyree said that:

It's learning not to show what you are feeling on the inside until you've got all the information, all the perceptions... until you've got it all. (Self-regulation) And then you can go with it and use emotion to inform your actions.

Like Janet, Nyree suggested expressing emotions can have a detrimental effect but that any limitations can be addressed if a Principal has intrapersonal emotional intelligence. By having a sense of one's own strengths and weaknesses she was able to receive feedback on the manner in which she expressed emotion:

I did have conversations with the Principal at one of my schools and I sought his advice on what I needed to do to take the next step. There were a few things I needed to work on... he told me that *I needed to control my facial expressions. When he sat in a meeting and the staff wouldn't do what I wanted them to do he could see that I was annoyed. I needed to develop my poker face.* (Self-regulation)

This data, in which the participants discuss their views on displaying emotions, supports the assertion by Blackmore (2013) that emotional literacy may be brought into play to suppress emotional response. Having the capacity to read and manage one's own emotions, Blackmore argues, may result in conformity and consensus. For example, Nyree, in receiving feedback from an experienced Principal, was asked to work on her own facial expressions to conform to emotional expressions that were expected and viewed as acceptable.

Self-regard

In the literature review Mayer, Roberts and Barsade (2008) identified trends that appeared to extend across several studies in both qualitative and quantitative studies of the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso model, often referred to as the MSCEIT model. One of the understandings contained with the General Effect table, is that emotionally intelligent leaderships would have better psychological wellbeing. Self-esteem and emotional intelligence would lead to greater life satisfaction. It made sense to code the responses of the Principals to consider the role of self-regard – meaning the ability to consider oneself - in light of the changing nature of leadership and the challenges faced.

Phillip acknowledged that his decision-making was influenced by his emotional state:

The emotional side of things is a part of a person's personality as well. *So, self-doubt and self-worth is a part of every decision and you think, not every decision, 'Oh God...'* (Self-regard)

The comment from Phillip indicates that, when a decision has to be made, there is a component of his thinking that says, "Oh God...", which perhaps reflects his concerns and self-doubt about making the right decision. Yet when discussing the opportunity for collegiate support, Phillip noted it was:

... something I've thought about. I don't know who... *I don't know who I am going to be able to link up with for any type of support.* (Pressure) If I've got issues with the staff, or the parents, or whatever, I don't have a person I can link up too. *I do need somebody within the school. Nah, I haven't expressed these concerns.* (Self-regard) But if something cropped up and I had no friggin' idea what to do and some teacher hit some student deliberately – or accidentally – and the shit is flying, it's all going everywhere, who do I go to? What do I do?

Although he expressed a desire to receive some support, it emerged that his personal self-regard played a role in Phillip being unable to reach out to his peers:

... *cause I didn't feel confident enough. I didn't feel... I was on the verge of email, of phoning, I just... I think I would still be so anxious, not only being new to the job, I'm still... I have doubts.* (Self-regard) I'm still in the rough. I am still wondering if it's the job for me. Just self-doubt, you know what I mean?

Phillip was not alone in having a low self-regard – meaning the ability to consider oneself – as this quote links back to his doubts about his confidence. Another participant in the study, Ava, noted that:

The one thing I don't do well, and I have to overcome it, is to seek the collegiality of my peers, (Perceptiveness) to talk to another principal about. I've, I've got a beaut bloke at a specialist school just down the road. He contacts ME (her emphasis) and he sticks his head in the office and asks, 'How's it going?' and sometimes we go out for coffee. If it wasn't for him, if it wasn't for that lifeline, I don't know that I'd feel quite as happy about the role. So, linking into that and, you know, really developing that sense of collegiality and team and strength in a team is something that I need to do better. I find ... I just can't make it happen. (Self-regard)

Neither of these principals had an Assistant Principal to call upon, which served to contrast the steps Harry and Janet could take to seek support. Harry noted that he and his Assistant Principal could discuss which person would be best able to handle a difficulty family:

I'd talk to others about the best tact to take. This would be with teaching colleagues before I had an AP so now, having an AP, is a tremendous support.

For Phillip and Ava, 'heroic leadership' (Blackmore, 2013) was not sufficient to address a sense of alienation from their work. Once more, the need to develop a personal and professional identity (Blackmore, 2011) is highlighted if Principals are to develop their sense of self-regard.

The Impact of 'Outside' and 'Inside- School Perspectives'

This section presents Principals' comments on the demands and expectations that are created by 'outside-' and 'inside-school perspectives' (Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet, 2011). In the literature review Schmidt (2009) and Crawford (2007) acknowledged that differing perspectives on what good education looks like, and how it can be achieved, can come into conflict. The Principal is expected to deal with competing demands and react to these pressures. Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004) and

Schmidt (2009) raised concerns that having to do so has an emotional toll, particularly in creating a sense of loneliness.

Loneliness

Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004) found that ‘structural loneliness’ was a significant issue, meaning the Principal felt isolated from others. Principals readily talked about this component of their day-to-day lives in this study. Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet, 2011, in the literature review, noted that the complications of decision-making between ‘inside and outside-school perspectives’ contributed to their sense of loneliness and pressure so it was important to code the interview data with this in mind.

Phillip, as a beginning Principal, conceded that the displeasure of other stakeholders can lead to feelings of pressure, which he viewed as being synonymous with his work space.

.... there is a distinct sense of isolation not only distance wise, not just physically, but maybe on an emotional level, you know,

This aligns to the literature presented by Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004), which found that ‘structural loneliness’ was a significant issue as Principal felt isolated from others. As Berkovich and Eyal (2015) established, Principals’ emotions were also found to be influenced by these factors. Nyree substantiated this perspective by adding:

I don’t think it matters how long you’ve been in this job... This is where I find the role really difficult, *there isn’t anybody else. Depending on what it is I can talk to some people... but it can be lonely.* (Loneliness)

Harry reinforced the idea that loneliness exists for principals:

I don’t think I could do this job unless I had someone to fall back on, whether it’s this particular person, an AP or someone else. *You can’t do the job by yourself. Being a school principal can be an extremely lonely job.* (Loneliness)

Given the responsibility of the role, Janet commented:

I think they see the issue as being the responsibility of the Principal. *The buck stops with you...* (Pressure) and some of the rubbish you

have to deal with, in term of... and *it can be kind of lonely.*

(Loneliness)

She concluded that no matter the leadership model put in place there was significant stress on the daily decision making for a Principal:

At the end of the day, even if it's collaborative, people might not like the decision but *ultimately the buck stops with you. There is a sense of pressure there.* (Pressure) A Principal has to be honest with themselves though and do what, well what they feel is right.

These comments illustrate the point that treating emotional intelligence as an individualised skill set may lead to a further sense of isolation and loneliness. Blackmore (2013) argues that, as a result of seeing emotional intelligence as an individualized, acquirable skill, little attention is paid to what it means to work within collective relationships of trust. She argues that collective activism might be an effective approach to reduce loneliness and pressure, whereas heroic individualism may be negatively impacting principals (Allegre & Ferrer, 2010).

The next section of the chapter presents Principals' experiences with mentoring and collegiate programs as a way of seeking support. It addresses the idea that working within collective relationships of trust may reduce isolation and loneliness.

Mentoring

The key aspects of mentoring that are relevant to this study are the findings of Smith (2007). It was appropriate to code the responses of the Principals to mentoring given that Smith (2007) found Principals who shared their professional understandings and their expertise felt they could contribute in mutually meaningful and beneficial ways. This created a sense of belonging and reduced the sense of isolation that was described by Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004) and Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) and, to a lesser extent, Schmidt (2009) and Crawford (2007).

Mentoring for Beginning Principals

Nyree spoke of the benefits involved in mentoring beginning Principals, describing her own formative experiences:

Having that mentor alongside me built up those skills by working beside her and looking at how she worked...

(Mentoring for beginning Principals) I think it's the relationships and the similar philosophies about children and their learning.

Drawing upon her experience acting a mentor, Janet made a significant distinction from the other Principals as she believed that a mentoring program should address the emotional aspects of the role:

The program where I have mentored beginning Principals, some of that is around implementing curriculum and looking at changes at your school (Mentoring for beginning Principals) but some of it is around the emotional stuff. If you have a really difficult situation with a parent and you're talking about it, or with a teacher, or whatever, and they're talking about it then it's sort of that debriefing and saying "Yeah, that was a good thing you did" or "It was good that you said that," or maybe "You could've done this."

In order to address the emotional aspects of being a Principal with a mentor, William talked about the role of trust and that, if the mentor/ protégé relationship was not working effectively, the informal opportunities were important:

Talking about leadership programs, a lot of the stuff that happens now tends to be more informal. *I'm quite enjoying the opportunity to help someone who says, "I don't know"*. (Mentoring for beginning Principals) There should be a formal arrangement made by the department so, um, when someone starts you know, you are this person's mentor. It requires someone else you can go to in case it's just not working for you or it's in its really early days and you just don't have that trust.

The idea that trust is important was shared by Janet and Phillip. Based on her mentoring roles, Janet expressed a similar sentiment to William as she explored the concept of trust as well:

I need to establish trust. I need my protégé to feel comfortable with me because if they can't talk to you about everything, (Perceptiveness) I mean I am a reasonably honest person but I am happy to share my experiences, good and bad and where I've made

mistakes. *I am involved in these various mentoring programs because I want to help people reach their full potential.* (Mentoring for beginning Principals)

The participants in the study agreed with the findings of MacBeath (2011), Cranston (2007) and Sparks and Switzer (2007). There is an opportunity, and a willingness amongst some of the participants in this study, to mentor these ‘career deputies’ so that their potential can be realised by listening to the content, feelings and meaning of challenges facing them. Mentoring may be an opportunity to understand the sense of struggle and conflict that may arise for principals, which can produce an emotional response. Discussion around different emotional responses may allow for an acceptance of variation in emotional responses.

Phillip felt that interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, which are informed by emotional intelligence, were needed for the mentoring and protégé relationship to be successful:

You’d hate to set up a mentoring situation where you had a person that you didn’t get along with, that you clashed with. I don’t know if consideration is given to particular skills if they are trying to support a Principal. (Perceptiveness) It could make it worse... the mentoring, the type of person, it’s got to be matched up. They have to have an understanding of other people and how they feel.

The concept that mentoring can provide the support Principals need highlights the relational practice of their role. As Retelle (2010b) and Riley (2009) noted in the literature review, an imbalance of power between mentors and protégés are often fraught with danger due to the unequal distribution of power that is already found in education due to the hierarchical nature of positions.

Collegiate Groups for Experienced Principals

This section contains reports by several of the participants referring to the need to have collegiate groups where Principals, both experienced and inexperienced, could seek support in coping with the loneliness, pressure and stress of their job. Harry mentioned the need to have supportive personal relationships with other Principals in order for this support to be meaningful:

Firstly, we need to have strong collegiate groups, (Collegiate groups for Experienced Principals) and not the large collegiate groups the

Department has where all the principals get together with the regional director ... They have 80 principals to deal with. You don't get those personal relationships.

Harry discussed why small collegiate groups allowed for a greater opportunity to establish trust:

The networks ... those are things that keep you sane. (Collegiate groups for Experienced Principals) The department does have ... we meet once a month to have a formal meeting with 30 principals but it's the more informal networks that I rely on and that's where you learn who can work with and trust and how open you can be with people.

The development of these interpersonal relationships was of vital importance for Harry:

Being able to meet in an informal network, well it gives me the option to talk about some of the problems I might be having. (Collegiate groups for Experienced Principals) To be open and honest though, well I need to be able to trust others. When it's a larger group it's hard to really get to know people.

Harry recalled that:

I didn't have this small school network when I started. I struggled without it but now ... Now we have formed a school network. There are 5 local primary schools. We hold a breakfast at least once a month and sometimes have lunch together. We email each other, we are very open with each other. We negotiate enrolments, sit on each other's selection panels and we are there for each other. And *if one of us is having a bad trot we'll rally around them and look after each other.* (Collegiate groups for Experienced Principals) When I first came here we didn't have anything like that arrangement. I feel ... I know that I can ring one of my colleagues and they'll be supportive.

Collegiate support is given a vital role in forming a personal and professional identity, given the quotes from Harry. Zorn and Boler (2007) and Blackmore (2011) discuss the need for professional development to address the deep emotions of empathy, compassion and care, fear, anger and resentment. Harry's discussion around his

professional identity provides evidence of professional development occurring through meaningful collegiate support.

In addition to Harry, the ability to rely on other principals and to have their support was a significant aspect of Janet's role:

As a Principal, you have to be strong in a range of situations. You have to ... but *I am lucky. I have a collegiate group of principals I can talk to about stuff like that if I need to.* (Collegiate groups for Experienced Principals) I remember a situation a few years ago that really got to me ... and I rang a colleague and I burst into tears on the phone to her but then I pulled myself together and just went out and dealt with it.

In terms of her own personal support, Janet commented that:

I have colleagues that I can call up and say, 'What do you think about this?' and "What do you think about that?" and no one judges us. (Collegiate groups for Experienced Principals)

These perspectives reinforce the importance of Principals' relational practice in their daily lives. Blackmore (2013) argued that emotion is not restricted to an individual attribute or expression but that it can lead to a collective feeling or joint action. The need to take collective action may form around issues of alienation from work and a sense of powerlessness.

The views expressed by Janet and Harry indicate that some Principals may be in a place to take collective action and form a supportive, collegiate network. When there are feelings of isolation and pressure due to a sense of powerlessness from within the education system and its governance, Principals may recognise the need to create a sense of belonging.

Some of the participants in this study demonstrated an awareness of the value in sharing their professional understandings. They felt they could contribute in mutually meaningful and beneficial ways. This created a sense of belonging and reduced the sense of isolation. However, the interviews indicated that not all Principals felt this way. Phillip and Ava did not feel as though they could seek or develop collegiate support due to their low 'self-regard'.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a representative collection of answers from the six Principals. An analysis of the perspectives and experiences of the Principals allowed for connections to the key concepts from the literature review to be provided. The qualitative data suggests that Principals view emotion as being an important component of their day-to-day lives, because, as they say, “schools are about people”. Their role heavily engages with others who present a range of ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’.

As coding was done by reading through the data and categorising information using predetermined (a priori) codes perceptiveness, empathy, self-awareness, self-regulation and self-regard were components of the ability based model of emotional intelligence. They highlighted the importance of emotions in developing these interpersonal relationships.

The principals presented their thoughts on the need to be perceptive and to have empathy for others in fostering these interpersonal relationships. This understanding could lead to a change of approach, or flexibility, as Principals used the information gathered through their emotional intelligence of perceptiveness and empathy to inform their decisions. The emotions of others influenced a variety of matters for each Principal, such as the leadership approach they felt comfortable implementing or resolving a conflict between a parent and a teacher.

This chapter also presented the thoughts of the Principals on the need to be self-aware and to demonstrate self-regulation in trying circumstances. These intrapersonal aspects of emotional intelligence were important in the day-to-day lives of the participants.

Having to deal with loneliness, pressure and stress within the role was discussed by the Principals, who suggested mentoring and collegiate groups as possible forms of support. These perspectives provided alternative views to Goleman’s emotional intelligence theory (2005) as the Principals highlighted the way in which unequal power distribution and a sense of alienation from their work could lead to a joint action or a collective feeling.

Blackmore (2013) noted that emotionality needs to be considered as Principals experience their context through their emotions both at an intrapersonal level and through their relationships with others and the system within which their professional

identities are formed. The history and culture for Nyree's primary school, in which multiple Principals had been there within a short period of time, is a context that influenced the day-to-day relationships and emotions she felt.

On the other hand, Phillip found that pressure was derived from being at an all girls' school. Whilst he referred to the idea of being under the surveillance of teachers and staff; the pressure of managing the tension between being a male principal at a girls' school is a context that was unique to this study.

Ava, citing a lack of departmental support, explored the way in which her context influenced her day-to-day life and the perspectives on the role of emotional intelligence in the work that they do. The experiences of these principals would indicate that it is imperative we understand the context within which principals form their professional identities.

Chapter 5 now draws together the Principals' responses and presents the main emergent themes that the researcher identified from an analysis of each participants two interviews. A more detailed synthesis is now presented in which the information from the literature review will also be used to tease out the intricacies involved in identified broader themes.

Chapter 6 is the final chapter and reports on the conclusions reached in this study, discusses the implications and makes recommendations for further study.

Chapter Five: Themes from the Data

After presenting the categorised information using predetermined (a priori) codes in Chapter 4, it meant that the questions developed for the second round of interviews could explore the emergent ideas in greater depth. This allowed for greater trustworthiness in the data as the principals responded to the themes that had been identified in the initial analysis.

Subsequently, Chapter 5 presents a summation of four main themes that emerged from the data analysis of the two sets of interviews as a result of an understanding that emotions are central in understanding educational leaders, as Berokvich and Eyal (2015) highlighted in the literature review. These themes were Pressure, Relationships with Others, Relationship with Self and Support and Mentoring.

Each section will explore how the participants' comments were related and informed each theme. The data from the qualitative interviews informed the selection of the themes as there was an apparent congruence in the points raised in Chapter 4. The themes were also informed by the current research literature. At the beginning of each theme identified in this chapter, attention will be drawn to the relevant sections from Chapter 4 where the individual responses were used, in conjunction with the literature, to investigate the perspectives of individual school Principals about the ways in which emotions impacts their day-to-day lives.

Pressure

This emergent theme addresses the component of the research question that asks in which situations the relational practice of the day-to-day lives of the Principals' required an understanding of emotion.

According to the research literature, pressure was a significant factor in influencing the emotions of Principals on a day-to-day basis. Pressure, in turn, was leading to burnout as Principals, who are either beginning their professional careers or are experienced, are trying to cope with the emotional dissonance – referenced by Brennan and Mac Ruairc's (2011) - that can be created from having to implement a leadership approach, deal with staff, address community demands and support others.

(Brennan and Mac Ruairc, 2011; Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet, 2011; MacBeath, 2011; Kelchtermans, 2007).

All of the participants felt that they dealt with a significant amount of pressure that stemmed from staff, students, parents and external forces such as government departments. According to Blackmore (2010a and 2013) rendering emotions as acquirable skills ignore how emotions are central to identity and how ‘ways of being’ are influenced by gender, race, social expectations and stereotypes. Context, it could be argued, is crucial as leadership and emotions are shaped and acted upon as a social, relational practice.

The responses of the participants in this study suggested that context is important. The history and culture for Nyree’s primary school influenced the day-to-day relationships and emotions she felt because the community of teachers and parents “referred to it as a stepping stone school. People just apply to get a job and then they’d apply to a bigger school.”

Furthermore, the concerns raised in the literature review about macro-political actions influencing the expectations around school leadership emerged through the interviews. Riley (2011, 2015) indicated that the constantly changing educational environment regarding resources, accountability demands and curriculum place pressure upon experienced Principals too and the frustration of as she spoke of a school being a “whole lot more than its data” and that a “holistic approach isn’t being taken” was evident.

When moving in to a new school, as a beginning or an experienced principal, the need to develop an understanding of the perceptions held by the other stakeholders in the community was identified. The Principals spoke about the need to develop and foster trust, particularly with the community. An understanding of the context for each Principal was important due to the role it played in the emotions that were felt by themselves and others in the community. Phillip noted that the culture and history of his school played its role in creating pressure for him. He found it a challenge to try to find his place in an all-female environment, one in which he was a minority.

Look, I think coming from a male perspective is ... I think one of the things, going back a step, one of the big things is that as a male I might not ... well, as a male I might not think they are big issues ... early on I had one issue that was a personality clash with a teacher and I would’ve said “Look, you have good years and bad years and

you know, you've just got to work through it all." But I think, from a female point of view, this mother had to come in to tell me about this teacher [which caused tension between a staff member and a parent]. So, a lot of the things do come back, I think, to being at a girls' school and probably working with females, and young females as well.

One could ask whether Phillip was recognising the value in the diversity of his staff, as referenced by the concerns of Blackmore (2013). She suggests that the rise of emotional intelligence literature has led to emotions being treated as an individual capacity that is not culturally constituted or gender specific, and Phillip's comments may suggest that attributing certain emotions to gender is a problematic issue in the development of emotional intelligence in some leaders.

The emotional economy (Blackmore, 2013) of Nyree's organisation was quite different. The context of the history of her school led to unexpected pressures. With 7 Principals having been at her school in 10 years there was mistrust between the parents and the school leadership. William had a similar experience when stepping into the role of a Principal. He felt that the relationships between staff, parents and children were all inextricably linked and, importantly, understanding the emotions of others was important. Trust had become an issue at William's school as the Principals didn't stay and this context provided William with an understanding of how the community had come to feel a sense of despair. He sought to address this promptly by meeting regularly with parents and conducting meetings with the community.

These examples highlight the importance of context and understanding that the relational practice Principals' experience can vary depending of circumstance. A common internal school factor that had a significant impact on the emotional wellbeing of Principals was that of the daily interactions with parents. Nyree conceded that in dealing with parents, and not being able to call upon the staff for help, there was a sense of feeling alone and isolated. In her second interview she explained this with an example:

There is one parent here who I know is volatile and yet when he goes off it still impacts me. I still have the butterflies in the stomach, no matter how many times I've dealt with him, it still has that impact upon me because of his nature. And I don't think you can

ever learn how not to let it affect you.... It's too threatening and so your body just has a natural reaction to it.

The sense of struggle in responding to a parent who is perceived as volatile, and the isolation in coping with the emotional dissonance between parent and Principal, is evident in the comments from Nyree. This quote reflects the offensive behaviour found in the workplace for Principals, as reported by Riley (2015). His study also found that Principals were required to regulate their emotions, which is also discussed by Nyree.

She explained that there is a sense of isolation that comes about as a result of conflicts:

Talking to the staff is difficult, you don't want to share everything with them and there are things happening between the staff. I share everything with Mary, who works in the office... when there is something I need to talk about, think about. She's been here longer than I have and she is very good at thinking things through and coming up with suggestions...

In her interview, Janet expressed a sense of caution, noting that although the role of a Principal may feel lonely at times it was important to be careful with staff. Socialising with staff was dangerous and could lead to further internal pressures. Janet believed that seeking support to be able to cope with pressure had to be undertaken in ways that were appropriate. Phillip noted that pressure can come from those internal relationships with others in the school community who are involved in decision-making. He explained:

When decision-making is taken away from me, I feel anxious, very anxious. There's got to be issues. I am already anxious as I know there will be issues with the recruitment of the staff that I have inherited.

This anxiety can be exacerbated as pressure can come from 'outside-school perspective', which was also found in the research of Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011). Nyree, Ava and Phillip each spoke of the limitations imposed by external policy due to their school size. As their student population was too low, they were not allocated an Assistant Principal. Consequently, this meant that they felt a greater sense of isolation and powerlessness as they were expected to cope with stress and pressure without support.

Phillip had a similar experience to Ava, whereby both had to alleviate their stress by chatting to a spouse with little background information of the day-to-day challenges of their role. Despite this, Phillip knew that he would have to return to the four walls again the next day where he would have to endure isolation. Loneliness was also felt by Nyree as she confirmed that the lack of an Assistant Principal caused her to feel isolation. Without being able to turn to someone else, she felt lonely. When interviewed 12 months later, Nyree once again spoke about the lack of support:

I don't really have a sense of belonging and I'm not really able to problem solve issues with someone. Teachers have their own space, the staffroom, and a place to belong with each other. Principals experience more responsibility but receive less affirmation from peers... small schools don't have an Assistant Principal that can provide some support.

Through these interviews, it could be claimed that systemic factors had an impact on the emotional labour of these Principals as seen from their perspective. In contrast the 3 participants in this study who had been assigned Assistant Principals had very different experiences with notions of isolation. Working within a leadership structure may offer a better avenue of support for some Principals. Harry noted that, in these circumstances where there is inside school conflict, he and his Assistant Principal could strategise and discuss which person would be best able to handle a difficult family. Janet further highlighted the way in which an Assistant Principal was an important component of internal school support:

You need a range of strategies to resolve conflict, often I'll sit down and think about it. I'll talk to my AP. I'll jot down some things I am going to say or do, y'know. I find just reflecting on past experiences and things helps.

In addition to a lack of internal support with day-to-day pressures that occur, each Principal offered some insights into the role outside school decisions from the Department of Education and Training can play. On a professional level, Nyree lamented a recent discussion that had taken place:

The Regional Directors have to identify the underperforming 20% of Principals and they decide whether you get your increase or not how's that going to work? Are they going to name them? We can all keep learning ... so to have to label someone as

underperforming just because they need to work on certain areas!

Underperforming to me is sitting at your desk and not having interactions with the kids.

For Nyree, the introduction of a policy that she was unfamiliar with, and did not agree with on a personal level, caused her much consternation. Bamber et. al. (2014) noted that education may be implementing Lean production in which improved efficiency and productivity are key outcomes, however Ava noted that being a manager of change, in which the mandate from the Department of Education and Training comes into conflict with the intentions of the staff, becomes emotionally taxing. Ava explored the central role a Principal plays when 'outside-' and 'inside-school perspectives' come into conflict with each other, which added another dimension to the complexity of her role. Moving away from the values of her school meant that many teachers were in tears and that some teachers would also shout at Ava.

For Ava, the trust she was seeking to establish with one group was significantly undermined when their needs and intentions differed significantly to that of the Department of Education and Training. These findings aligned with the research of Schmidt (2009) and Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) as they found that when 'outside-' and 'inside-school perspectives' are in conflict Principals have to find a balance between these competing demands, which leads to an emotional toll. Policy decisions, at least from the perspective of this Principal, created an environment of greater emotional labour.

William, in beginning his role as Principal at a new school, had a similar experience. The mandate he had been given by the Department of Education and Training came into conflict with the culture and direction that had existed with the parents within the school. Upon taking up this position William knew that he was viewed with suspicion due to what policies he was expected to implement by the department. Bamber et. al. (2014) explored the idea that Lean ideas are being adapted from manufacturing contexts to industries such as education so that services can be provided in an efficient and effective way. William differed from the other Principals though as he discussed an element of intrapersonal emotional intelligence, namely that of a strong self-efficacy. This meant that William could lend his voice to views that may have been unpopular but, in dealing with the culture of the school and the need for change, he felt were necessary. He was able to persevere and accomplish his goals while, over time, gaining the trust of the teaching and parental community.

An important finding from the interviews was that dealing with ‘outside-school perspectives’ that are in conflict with the teachers within the school can be a cause of pressure. Ava offered insights into the tensions that exist between being responsible to the staff whilst also being responsible to the Department of Education and Training. She recounted that winding back some contracts of her staff, a common association with Lean principals (Bamber et. al., 2014) had a significant impact on her wellbeing because of the realisation that she was changing the direction of somebody’s life in a way that could have long-term ramifications.

A further pressure occurred when ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ come into conflict with one another over a child’s learning. There can be tensions between teachers and parents and Phillip explained how perceptiveness and empathy are important in making decisions. Knowing how much information to share with a teacher and how to communicate with them related to understanding the emotional state of that person. The relational practice of a Principals’ role was made clear in the way Phillip perceived the needs of experienced and inexperienced teachers as being different and, therefore, his expectations of how they handled a parents’ feedback had to be modified. Some staff could be pushed whilst doing the same thing to another may make them feel pressure.

A common observation amongst the Participants in this study was that experienced, as well as beginning Principals, would be confronted with a great deal of stress. Phillip, as a beginning Principal, conceded that the displeasure of other stakeholders lead to feelings of isolation and pressure, which he viewed as being synonymous with his workspace. Harry substantiated this view when he warned about the stress of the job and its impact upon his health, which was evident in chest pain and involuntary twitching of his face.

This response was significant as it corroborated the findings of Riley (2012), who found that Principals had higher levels of stress and almost double the rate of work related mental ill-health compared to other professions. The impact the pressure had on Harry’s physical health was enormous. This personal stress also had an impact on his emotional balance, particularly at home. This was a view shared by all of the Principals and Harry effectively encapsulated their thoughts when he said that his family life had suffered. He also wondered if he and his partner would still be together had he chosen a different profession.

Another form of pressure results from the leadership approach a Principal undertakes. Hallinger and Heck (2010), Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), Leithwood, Louise, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) and Silins and Mulford (2002) explain that emotional intelligence is most often linked to the transformational leadership approach as it emphasizes 'emotion and values and share in common the fundamental aim of fostering capacity development and higher levels of personal commitment' (p.31). However, the Principals acknowledged that whilst distributing some duties to Team Leaders and Assistant Principals may help to reduce pressure, they felt an underlying tension due to the need to control events. Harry, Ava and Janet noted that no matter the leadership model put in place there was significant stress on the daily decision-making they undertook as a Principal. Janet felt that as Principal she bore the ultimate responsibility and for this reason decision-making was emotionally taxing.

These perceptions of the Principals reflect the concerns Blackmore (2013) has about the focus on emotional intelligence and the manner in which it has resulted in individual impressions of having to control, and solve the problems of a school. Truly distributed leadership, she argues, is not simply a delegation down the line of particular work and responsibility. It is about knowing and creating a shared purpose that is informed by social justice principles.

Whilst the Principals acknowledged the importance of having the ability to perceive and have empathy for the emotions of others it appeared the relational practice of their role strained under the burden of stress. Phillip articulated this when explaining how his relationship with Rhonda, his receptionist, suffered. As he was unable to cope with parents who were irate and requesting frequent meetings that were confrontational, Phillip found himself becoming more direct and snappy towards Rhonda due to the pressure he felt from having to attend frequent parental meetings that required him to solve the issues they presented. Phillip's comment reveals that Principals need support and strategies to be able to cope. The Principals felt that certain forms of support, such as mentoring and collegiate networking, could assist them in regaining the proper emotional balance so that the daily decisions could be made sensibly, with proper consideration and consultation.

Given these pressures it became evident throughout the interview process that each Principal felt that they needed to have the ability to cope with stress that occurred from the culture of the school, as well as external factors that could, at times, lead to a clash between 'outside-' and 'inside-school perspectives'. The notion that

the position was challenging and, at times lonely, is significant as it may be a factor in leading to Principal burnout. This in turn can lead to a low retention rate which was a significant issue at two of the schools the interviewees came from. The question that emerges is what can beginning and experienced Principals do to support themselves?

Relationships with Others

A way in which Principals addressed the perceived pressures of the job was to utilise their ability to recognise emotions and to be empathetic to others. These traits are components of emotional intelligence and enabled the participants in this study to foster stronger relationships, thereby feeling they were reducing stress in their day-to-day lives. This section explores understandings of the value of relationships in greater detail.

In discussing the relational dimension of their role, the Principals each stated the importance of being able to respond to the emotional state of others. Gronn (2009) noted that when a person engages with the leadership process they are rarely, if ever, asked about the emotions that are involved when developing the necessary interpersonal skills required to understand others and to communicate with them effectively. The awareness displayed by these Principals indicates that Gronn's point is complex and significant and there may be a gap in the understanding of the reciprocal nature of emotional labour of being a Principal.

Perceptiveness emerged as an important component of emotional intelligence that strengthened the relationships with others, in the eyes of the Principals. Given that the emotional state of parents and teachers can be quite varied, it is not surprising that all of the Principals described the need to perceive the emotions of others as a way of reducing pressure. The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (2004) refers to the need to be able to perceive emotions in others and to use this information in understanding the feelings of others.

In Chapter 4 Harry discussed the need to be able to read body language, whilst Janet explored the idea that the success of her role rested upon her ability to recognise and respond to people's expressions. Nyree spoke about the importance perceptiveness plays in looking for emotional cues by reading a parent's face or by looking at the way they are walking. Janet discussed the importance of considering the emotional wellbeing of others as this can inform the response given:

It is hard to judge the emotional wellbeing of others. I think I can judge when people get stressed or tired and of not wanting to push them too hard. And that's probably an area of weakness for me, sometimes I worry about them... well, not worry about them but I don't want to push them too hard and then there are other people that need a bit more of a kick.

For Ava, utilising perceptiveness in the observation of others was an important facet of decision-making and sustaining the relationships with other members of the community. She explored the way in which inferring someone's wellbeing can lead to earlier management of potential problems from within her parenting community. The ability to perceive emotions in others could help deal with the complexity of the relationships that a Principal is expected to negotiate. Interestingly, Ava felt that 'emotional incapacity' was reflected in the manner in which some parents communicated their concerns to her. Consequently, she felt that the ability to infer feelings of discontent in others could be used to address and prevent misunderstandings that could harm the relationships around her.

In addition to using facial expressions, tone of voice and certain cues to understand the emotions felt by others, Phillip noted the importance of being approachable and how awareness of the impact of physical spaces could assist in perceiving the emotions of others. He said that:

I could see that staff were trusting me a little bit more 'cause they knew I was here, I could sit down with them. I have a desk as well so I hope staff see me as still an educator, as the big head honcho or come over and sit at the side so that I can sit down and read their body language and facial expressions more clearly.

This meant that his relationships with others could be enhanced as the physical space would allow him to perceive the emotions of those he was talking. For Janet, Harry and Phillip, perceptiveness could be more readily used if a Principal made themselves more approachable and could find opportunities in which facial expressions and body language could be better understood. As a result, the relationships with others would improve. In this sense, the concerns of Blackmore (2013) around emotional intelligence are substantiated. Rather than considering emotional intelligence as a skill that can be formed as an individual competence the contextual and situated relationships form an important part of understanding emotions in day-to-day settings.

Phillip articulated the need to have opportunities to discuss school related matters in which there was no pressure involved so he could learn to compare and contrast the tone of voice and facial expressions of a person in differing situations. Therefore, being approachable and establishing clear communication was one aspect of his role that Phillip commented upon. He noted, however, that emotional intelligence was required when acting upon these cues as his response to a situation would need to vary for different people. If the correct response was chosen then that relationship would continue to benefit. As such, context would appear to be important. The specific histories and identities of the participants in an interaction inform the way the way in which people may respond to a situation. Phillip specifically mentioned the need to understand the way different people respond to scenarios, which illustrated that he was sensitive to the importance of relationships and the need to try to see other points of view.

Understanding when to push and when to support parents and staff members is a complex aspect of the relationships Principals have with others. Several participants noted that the emotional climate of their staff impacted upon their management of the school. Harry explained that bad news could be delivered at any time if he knew his staff were upbeat. Alternatively, when his staff were tired and demoralised Harry knew to adjust his discussions with staff as these emotions had to be taken into account. This notion of knowing when to challenge or support staff based on a Principal's emotional understandings of others also emerged in the interviews with William, who explained that understanding his teachers was a vital aspect of his decision-making process. Separating emotions from the social, relational practice of leadership appears fraught with danger.

It is important to recognise the emotions of others and to build relationships by getting to know them. Once I've decided that the teacher is worth getting to know because they can contribute something to the child's learning then I'll spend some time thinking about the teacher's expressions and what is going on in their lives... its important so that I know when I can challenge them, when I can hold them accountable.

Empathy is a component of the relationship theme that is mentioned in the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (2004). Principals felt that their ability to alter their perspective in difficult situations allowed them to have

empathy for children, parents and teaching staff. A component of being able to empathise with others may also include understanding why that individual feels a sense of powerlessness or frustration. Working within collective relationships of trust may mean Principals need to understand the role social expectations, personal histories, gender, language or ethnicity may be playing in the lives of the people before them. The Principals in this study understood the need to take measured steps in managing conflict as difficult situations needed to be handled tactfully and open discussion encouraged where possible.

Empathy acts as a significant component of developing the interpersonal aspects of a Principal's day-to-day role. Maintaining respectful relationships with parents, staff and children meant that the ability to empathise is an important skill. Nyree felt that by understanding others it was easier to remain calm during a confrontation. She mentioned that Principals needed to exercise calmness when trying to understand the emotions of others. Janet suggested that in addition to remaining calm, Principals needed to take the time to get to know their community. The building of relationships and applying interpersonal skills was a cornerstone of managing her relationships with others.

The Principals discussed the importance of responding to, and recognising the varying needs of others. They indicated that understanding the different ways in which people react or respond was vital. This, in turn, meant that a Principal needed to use their emotional intelligence so that they knew how to respond when seeking to obtain the best possible outcome. This is an area of complex behaviours though, as Phillip conceded when he spoke of having to communicate with different people and successfully maintain those relationships:

The biggest thing though is being able to communicate, it's wanting to communicate across different age groups, different IQ levels, different communication strategies when addressing males compared to females... being able to relate to people is so important. And you've got to, not manipulate, but work with those people as effectively as possible.

The respondents explored the notion of how perceptiveness and empathy provide Principals with the opportunity to be well-equipped for dealing with day-to-day interactions and those relationships in the community. This theme was significant as it aligned with the research of Mayer, Roberts and Barsade (2008), who argue that

emotional intelligence is the ability to carry out accurate reasoning focused on emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought. However, Allegre and Ferrer (2010) and Blackmore (2011; 2013) argue that Principals also need to understand the context of a situation. The way in which emotions are displayed, perceived and understood may vary depending on vital factors, such as ethnicity, gender, family history or cultural and social positioning. Therefore, emotional intelligence goes beyond reading and managing one and others own emotions – it requires an understanding of the social exchange between individuals and what is really going on.

Furthermore, these interactions can influence a Principal's sense of self. The need for self-awareness emerged as a key tenet of their daily emotions as the participants navigated a range of complex 'outside' and 'inside-school perspectives' on a daily basis.

Relationship with Self

Another important theme emerging from the interviews was the Principals' identified need to reflect on their own emotions and to have self-help strategies in place in order to cope with the emotions at work that was a part of their day-to-day lives. This theme is presented as one of reasonably high frequency as four of the Principals outlined a shared belief that the ability to understand and monitor one's own emotional state was just as important an aspect of being emotionally intelligent as interpersonal intelligence. In addition to knowing one's emotional state there were also times when this had to be managed in order for them to function effectively in their day-to-day lives.

Aspects of self-awareness that emerged related to recognising one's own emotions and seeking to understand the impact one's emotional state had when making decisions, interacting with others and undertaking their day-to-day role. The participants in this study acknowledged the need to understand one's own strengths and weaknesses too by taking the time to engage in accurate self-reflection. Phillip displayed self-awareness as an educational leader and his need to set an example when he stated:

I guess there's stuff I want teachers to be displaying in terms of emotional intelligence that I need to display first. So, in terms of

modeling that engagement, in modeling their involvement and taking an interest in them, not only as educators but as people as well.

Phillip noted that intrapersonal awareness was an important aspect of emotional intelligence if he wanted other key stakeholders in his community to demonstrate emotional intelligence in their roles. Several of the Principals in this study used self-awareness to assess whether they were in an appropriate emotional state to address the issue before them, and would apply this self-awareness during conversations with others in the community if the situation became particularly volatile. This mindfulness was needed so that their own mental state could be considered in light of their sense of emotional wellbeing and, if needed, strategies could be used to assist in coping with the situation. One such example was provided by Nyree, who recalled that she listened to an irate parent and then developed an appropriate response with the parent even though feeling upset. Nyree's reflections on this volatile parent were reported on earlier in this chapter. It is clear that Principals need to have the capacity to assess their personal feelings and attitudes within a short space of time when there is a heightened emotional exchange occurring. This is a significant theme as the Principals in this study outlined that there is a need to assess one's own feelings in a rapidly changing environment. Adapting one's own feelings to the people and the situation evolving before the Principal was explored in the interviews. Nyree discussed this concept in her second interview:

Emotional intelligence means being able to use your emotions appropriately for whatever occasion arises. Sometimes you have to be very sympathetic and you need to show... the real you, perhaps? Other times you need to keep that back... you need to keep a façade because, particularly with parents that are almost bullying or harassing you... I've had to learn how to deal with that.

In this situation, there is a danger that Principals feel a need for 'heroic individualism' – the need to be able to solve problems themselves. The participants felt the need to act a certain way which supports Blackmore's (2011; 2013) argument that emotional response is sometimes suppressed to comply with expected more conformist behaviour.

Nyree has illustrated why being aware of one's emotions to various situations is important. A recurring theme in the interviews was the need to be aware of their

own feelings at any given time. Janet stated that self-awareness was an important concept in her day-to-day life as it informed her understanding of her own reactions in trying circumstances. Furthermore, the notion of self-awareness is important as the Principals explained how understanding their own emotions is a way of managing self-regulation. An understanding of self-regulation was important as it allowed Principals some time to compose themselves and to help ensure that their own reactions were professional and appropriate. Several participants indicated that self-awareness was integral in undertaking a reflective process. These findings are important as they align with the research of Retna (2011), who found a desire existed amongst the Principals in her study to engage in a continuous conversation with their inner self. Seeking to deliberately create the mental space required for reflection was an important concept that emerged from the interviews. The Principals noted the importance of doing this so that they could learn from the past and become more aware of what they could do better during future interactions. For example, Janet recalled that she had been caught off guard by an irate parent and had to struggle to maintain her composure.

This experience meant that Janet had to reflect on what she could have done differently. She said that Principals should learn from their personal experiences that revealed a flaw in their interactions with others. Nyree shared a similar view as she had sought advice, in the past, on how to control her facial expressions when resolving issues with parents or staff members. It was only through engaging in self-reflection that Nyree developed the skills to control the emotions that were evident in her facial expressions. This supports Retna (2011), who found that self-reflexivity meant that Principals could learn to manage anger, frustration and the sense of being overwhelmed in order to present a more reliable and reasoned approach when facing confrontational issues. In one of her interviews, Janet explored how self-awareness and reflection could lead to the development of particular strategies. She believed that Principals needed to be emotionally intelligent when they dealt with conflict and applied critical thinking to develop strategies that work for them as an individual. After several experiences in her formative years as a Principal Janet noted that she developed a visualisation strategy that now assists her in resolving conflict.

Salient points to emerge from these interviews include the role of relationship building with a strong emphasis on knowing oneself as one of the relationships to be developed. These reflections illustrate that Principals can feel anger, despair and

powerlessness when they are unable to redress a perceived inequality for others in the community, however an understanding of self plays a central role in understanding the emotions at work in their day-to-day lives.

Self-regard

Another component of a Principals' relationship with self is the role of self-regard and how it can support or hinder Principals as they engage in emotions at work. A significant finding of this study was that a lack of self-regard emerged as a significant impediment for two of the six participants when it came to seeking support.

For a Principal in a private school, where the Department of Education and Training were not involved in organising formal meetings, a Principal could easily become lonely and isolated due to a lack of support. Phillip noted that he was not a part of any collegial network but that it was something he had considered, as he would like to be able to turn to someone for support. Twelve months later, in the second interview with Phillip, a discussion on support unearthed an interesting aspect of Phillip's experience. Whilst he acknowledged that talking to like-minded people could offer support in the form of shared experiences and possible strategies to resolve an issue, he hadn't actively sought out support. He explained:

I guess the biggest stress for me is ... is doubting yourself. Cause once you start doubting yourself then that's where I find I start to worry about what other people think of me.

Later, in the same interview, he noted that:

That's been the biggest issue for me. I start to experience self-doubt, you start to think about whether you are doing a good job and, especially in the first year, you begin to wonder 'Is this the right job for me?'

Phillip conceded that he didn't feel confident enough to become part of a collegial network. He explained that, despite being on the verge of phoning or emailing for support his anxiety and self-doubt meant that he was unable to seek the support he needed. This theme became powerful as two of the Principals expressed particular difficulties in developing their intrapersonal understanding, to the extent that they felt uncomfortable in proactively seeking support. In addition to the struggles experienced by Phillip, Ava noted in her first interview that she struggled to seek the collegiality

of her peers. Again, twelve months later, Ava's response to being proactive and seeking out collegial support had not evolved significantly. Whilst Ava and Phillip understood that their self-regard was a factor in them being unable to build support networks, their self-efficacy still appeared to be suffering due to a sense of isolation that occurred because of the pressures from the emotions at work.

Janet discussed the need for Principals to understand their own emotions. Understanding why she reacts to something is important to her in her day-to-day role as a Principal, as was her ability to acknowledge if she got something wrong and needed further support. However, if a principal has low self-regard are they likely to confront such ideas? Is it important to utilise a form of support, be it mentoring, an Assistant Principal or a collegial program, to address this powerlessness that can be felt? Harry reflected on his years of experience as a Principal and explained that asking for support was not a sign of weakness. He made the point that it was common sense to ask for support and doing so exemplified a self-awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses. This intrapersonal understanding of emotion, that of having a strong self-regard, meant that, when faced with difficulties, Harry could seek the support he needed.

The participants in this study made it clear that emotional intelligence was about understanding others and, just as significantly, an understanding of one's self. Rather than thinking of emotion as an individual skill the responses of the Principals suggest mentoring, and more significantly, collegiate groups, appear to be the forums where Principals can capture the emotionality of their work and develop inter and intrapersonal skills useful for their work. By being a part of a collective, Principals use their professional relationships and identities to understand who they are. However, some Principals had difficulty in engaging in this process, whilst others used collective relationships of trust to survive.

Self-help and Support

Self-help is a sub-theme of Relationship with Self. The Principals in this study understood that emotional management work goes beyond being sensitive to others' feelings. There was an acknowledgement of one's own emotions and how they are displayed and perceived. The notion that coping strategies was important in helping to build intrapersonal skills emerged through discussions about the role emotions play in

the day-to-day lives of Principals. The ability to create an environment that can deal with ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ essentially relies on concepts around support.

In her first interview, Janet noted that visualisation was a strategy that she had developed in coping with pressure. Interestingly, in her second interview, Janet noted that she had wanted to develop additional self-help strategies in the intervening period. As a result, she had begun to use self-talk to help her keep things in perspective.

Self-talk can be included under the notion of ‘Reflection’. William noted that the ability to reflect, and question his actions for the day provided him with the mental space to process the pressures of his role. This often took place on the drive home. William found that driving home gave him the opportunity to reflect on the day and unwind, as did Phillip. Nyree discussed her coping strategies of mindfulness and patience, and the role they played so that emotions did not cripple her decision-making process. She said that mulling over information and not rushing her decision was important as it provided her with a chance to weigh up possible outcomes. This feedback complemented the thoughts of Phillip. As a beginning Principal, he noted that he had not yet developed many coping strategies. Given that these skills appear to be developed ‘on-the-go’ it would seem important that a beginning Principal should receive support so development is not the painful process of trial and error.

Support and Mentoring

Support and mentoring were common themes that arose in discussions with the participants. The Principals viewed mentoring as an essential aspect of their role in being able to cope with the emotional side of their work. They spoke of their role in supporting other people in their community, such as supporting staff with new ideas, listening to problems for parents and teachers, and resolving these issues. On the other hand, the participants in this study commented on institutional factors, a lack of departmental support and how this impacted upon their wellbeing. Context is important as three of the Principals had not received an Assistant Principal due to systemic policies. These Principals communicated a sense of isolation, powerlessness and, at times, despair.

Mentoring was explored as a means of receiving support so that Principals could develop a stronger self-efficacy. The participants also discussed the role of collegial support, which enabled Principals to share beliefs and philosophies, offer ideas to resolve conflict, undertake sessions that would see ideas implemented effectively and confide in someone who had an understanding of the pressures and challenges that existed due to the relationships Principals need to establish to fulfill their responsibilities.

The peer-to-peer networking established by the Department of Education and Training in effectively supporting Principals was discussed by several respondents. In one discussion Harry noted that because there were 80 Principals involved personal relationships were not really developed. All of the Principals felt that the networking offered by the Department was too large and could, at times, be hijacked by the need to do more things rather than to discuss what could be done to offer more support to individual Principals. In the interviews with the participants a sense of placing policy over the importance of the person was offered. Ava concluded her first interview by stating:

The Department don't walk the talk at all, it's just rubbish. And I think there is some disenchantment in the profession. At a regional meeting the regional director said, well got up and said, 'Principals are meant to do this, this and this'. One rather outspoken leading principal of our network said to her 'And what's going to be taken off the list to enable us to do this?' And she said, 'Well we all just... we all just have to toughen up and do it.' There is no empathy. That's where the department is coming from, just toughen up. So support, what support? Empathy, what empathy? Compassion, what compassion? They couldn't give a shit.

Given the stress and pressure of the role, where can the Principals turn if, in fact, this disenchantment is widely felt? Whilst the participants mentioned the importance of creating a safe, supportive environment for staff and students, they acknowledged that they received a lack of support from other members of the community, such as parents, staff and administration. To clarify this point, Janet noted that:

The staff will support you from the point of view of new initiatives being implemented – if they agree with it of course! – but what I

mean is... well, that I don't get support in the way staff ask "How are you going? How was your day?"

If the Department of Education and Training and the members of the community do not support the Principal's wellbeing then where can Principals turn? The respondents agreed that this was an important question as experiences of these Principals suggested types of stress were unavoidable. Nyree lamented that no matter how long someone had been a Principal there was loneliness associated with the role.

This observation may indicate that Principals feel there is no significant correlation in Principal stress being reduced with greater experience. It was concluded that even with years of experience stress wasn't avoidable. So how can this pressure be better addressed for our current and future Principals?

The notion of emotionality is important (Blackmore, 2013). What can Principals do if they feel emotion is not an individual skills or attribute and that there are systemic aspects of emotional labour to be addressed as well as individual skill development? The need to undertake joint action, or to act as a collective, was subsequently explored by the participants in this study through their discussions centered on mentoring and self-regard. The Principals held similar views to Daresh (2004), Henry (2010) and MacBeath (2011), who felt that mentoring programs that were attuned to the individual and contextual needs of a Principal offered the best possibility for support in an intellectually challenging and emotionally satisfying environment.

The benefit of mentoring programs was explained by Nyree. She spoke of the way in which a mentor had guided her and developed her skills. Interestingly, the interviews with the Principals offered a point of differentiation from the research literature as the Principals emphasised intrapersonal skills as well as interpersonal skills. The participants felt that being self-aware and able to recognise one's own emotions meant that a Principal could process their experiences and use this knowledge to develop strategies around self-regulation. This information could then be shared with a less experienced protégé.

Interestingly, Janet became involved in the mentoring program with the Bastow Institute only after developing her intrapersonal skills. For this Principal, an awareness of her own self-regard led her to an important conclusion:

I didn't always have the self-belief that I wanted to ride alongside people and help them develop that. I decided that I wanted to encourage, motivate and support them.

In order to act as a mentor, Janet felt that she needed to have a personal belief in herself. A stronger self-regard, it may be suggested, would make a more effective mentor.

As a beginning Principal, Phillip noted that a mentoring program might have assisted him in making the transition and identifying his strengths and areas of weakness. He noted that ideally the mentor would have had similar positions but would be more experienced. Working at a non-government school Phillip indicated a lack of surety as to where he could turn to access a mentoring program. Additionally, he felt that interpersonal and intrapersonal skills were needed for the mentoring and protégé relationship to be successful:

You'd hate to set up a mentoring situation where you had a person that you didn't get along with, that you clashed with. I don't know if consideration is given to particular skills if they are trying to support a Principal. It could make it worse ... the mentoring, the type of person, it's got to be matched up. They have to have an understanding of other people and how they feel.

Much of the discussion around mentoring programs in the literature review focused on those Principals who are considered inexperienced. When asked what experienced Principals could do to seek support the participants spoke about the need to organise collegiate networking. The Principals agreed that meeting in small sociable groups was vital. They believed that it was more effective to have small localised groups where people have the time to meet openly and talk about their issues and seek advice. This, over time, would lead to a greater trust and respect. The need to undertake joint action, or to act as a collective, was thought to have the potential to empower Principals and to reduce a sense of isolation and stress.

Harry made a distinction between the support offered by large and small collegial groups. He explained that smaller collegiate groups were more effective as a Principal can learn whom they work well with and they can learn how open they can be. In order to be open and honest though Principals needed to be able to trust each other, which Harry explained was difficult to do in a larger group. Janet conceded that she was fortunate to belong to a collegiate group of Principals who could offer her

support and advice when times were challenging, in addition to being able to turn to an Assistant Principal. After sharing how she felt Janet was able to compose herself and resolve the issue. However, such collegial opportunities don't exist for all Principals.

Harry initially struggled as a Principal but found that once his small school network had been developed close relationships offered opportunities to redress the imbalance in the support many Principals feel is offered by the community. In this instance, his feelings of alienation in his work lead to forming a collegiate group where there was a collective feeling of powerlessness. He can now call upon his colleagues and know that he will receive support. Organising a small school network with peers would be possible whether a Principal is working in a Government, private or religious school. Whilst the participants in this study remarked on how this environment offered opportunities to think and talk about things, significant questions emerged. What role does self-regard play? How can a collegial group begin if Principals are unsure of where to begin seeking support, let alone proactively setting up such a small school network?

Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to add further insights to the data collected from the interviews by presenting a summation of the four main themes that emerged from the data analysis of the two sets of interviews. After the interviews had been transcribed and coded for initial themes, using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach, a list of themes was created to search for connections that existed across the interviews. After careful clarification and analysis, the four main themes to emerge from this study were Pressure, Relationships with Others, Relationship with Self and Support and Mentoring.

The school leaders indicated that they viewed emotional intelligence as having the ability to recognise and appropriately respond to the emotions of themselves, their students, teachers, parents and other members within their learning community. The Principals believed that the relationships they established were a fundamental part of their role and that an emotionally intelligent leader had strong interpersonal skills because of their ability to infer and read cues.

The participants also explored the role that self-awareness played and how internal and external pressures meant that an emotionally intelligent Principal would

develop particular strategies, such as self-talk, to cope with daily challenges. Pressure was a common experience for the participants regardless of age and experience and had an impact on their emotional wellbeing.

Pressure was associated with the context within which the Principals worked. For some there were difficulties in community expectations whilst for other Principals the policy decisions of ‘outside-school perspectives’ meant that they felt a greater sense of loneliness and isolation. The Principals acknowledged that, when feeling the strain of their role, the decision-making process could be compromised, so they needed to have some support mechanisms in place.

Over the course of the interviews the participants placed great importance on the need for this support. Whilst mentoring was one option that was explored, the support of the Department of Education and Training was critiqued. The Principals all said that smaller local peer-to-peer support groups are more effective in ensuring that the wellbeing of Principals is given some consideration.

However, some participants said that if their self-regard was low then they were unlikely to create, or participate in, collegiate groups that could offer a vital support network. Without being able to call upon others for support and to reframe their professional identities through a relational understanding with other Principals, some were left to solve the issues for their schools in isolation.

Chapter 6 will discuss the conclusions reached in this study and will contain recommendations for further study.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Implications

This study explored the way in which Primary School Principals' perspectives on situations that involve emotions at work, their perspectives on the role of emotional intelligence in the work that they do and the notion that context plays an important part too. In this chapter I provide a summary of the study and discuss the key findings. I also discuss the limitations of the study, as well as the implications for practice.

The Study

This study used a qualitative research approach to explore the role emotions play in the context of school leadership. Six Principals were selected to reflect a range of perspectives and life experiences. Data were collected through two semi-structured interviews with each Principal that ranged from 30 to 60 minutes in length with the second interview being conducted at least 12 months later than the first.

At the conclusion of the two interviews the major themes to emerge related to Pressure, Relationships with Others, Relationship with Self and Support and Mentoring. Structural factors are also summarised briefly.

Pressure was a recurring theme that was understood to occur on a daily basis, which would put a strain on Principals' wellbeing. The experienced and inexperienced Principals in this study described feelings of anger, despair and powerlessness and it would appear that the role of emotion in education is significant. An aspect of emotional intelligence that they believed to be important is that of self-awareness. Some of the participants explained that they used a knowledge of self to assess whether they were in an appropriate emotional state to address the issue before them. Additionally, the principals would apply this self-awareness during conversations with others in the community if the situation became particularly volatile.

The participants in this study all agreed that their relationship with self was important. Having self-awareness was an important facet of their work, particularly in being able to recognise and understand their own emotions and the way this might impact not just upon other people, but their decision-making as well. Self-regard and self-help were subthemes which will be discussed in this chapter.

Another element that was highlighted by the participants was the relationships they had with others. Leadership models, particularly transformational leadership, required the ability to perceive the emotions of others and to display empathy. When considering the behavioral components of this leadership approach, such as individualised support, intellectual stimulation and formulating a personal vision (Hallinger, 2003) the traits that enabled the participants to foster stronger relationships were important. T

The principals noted that they could infer emotion in others based upon their actions, speech and general demeanor. They felt that emotional intelligence was required to understand the needs of others so as to influence people by building up their skills. Having a social awareness meant being able to understand the moods of others. In the literature review Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004) explained that one facet of emotional intelligence is the capacity to understand emotions and emotional knowledge (p.197) and the participants substantiated this aspect of the ability-based model emotional intelligence used for this study.

Whilst the participants in the study felt they offered support to their staff and parents there was little being provided to them. The actions of the Department of Education and Training were questioned as Ava and Nyree believed that loneliness was felt without having an Assistant Principal in place to turn too. Although in a different educational setting, Phillip had a similar experience whereby he had to endure isolation. In the literature review, Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004), Kelchtermans (2005) and Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet (2011) documented the deeply felt need by teachers to feel part of a whole, to experience a sense of belonging

These interviews suggested that emotions, rather than being an individualised psychological characteristic, have a sociological facet as different contexts and their settings can result in various outcomes. As discussed earlier, none of these principals had an Assistant Principal to call upon, which served to contrast the steps Harry and Janet could take to seek support. Harry noted that he and his Assistant Principal could discuss which person would be best able to handle challenging matters.

These themes are discussed in this chapter to help understand the role emotion plays in the lives of these Principals and the place of emotional intelligence in providing experienced and aspiring Principals with a better chance of exercising different strategies to successfully navigate the challenges and pressures of their day-to-day roles.

Discussion of Results

Blackmore (2013) raises some concerns with the field's current focus on emotional intelligence. She expresses concern that emotional intelligence has been constructed in the leadership literature as an acquired trait or skill targeted at better managing others so that the focus is on responding to problems through the actions of a leader, rather than generating solutions with the whole school community. This thesis focuses on Principals' perceptions of emotions at work and the role their own emotional intelligence plays in the work they do. This study concludes that emotion is not simply a psychological construct but that it is also socially constructed.

Pressure

It was evident that the Principals in this study felt a great deal of pressure due to the performance aspect of their roles. Having to facilitate successful outcomes was a struggle, although the participants noted that they were able to call upon particular strategies, such as self-talk, to handle stress and pressure. These strategies helped to develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy which in turn led to an increased ability to be able to lead a community of learners.

Importantly, participants felt that their self-efficacy suffered when there was a lack of support from other people in their learning community. The examples provided by Ava make it clear that emotions emerge within social interactions and in particular contexts. Her self-efficacy was impacted by the This had a detrimental impact on her wellbeing as they felt a sense of isolation and loneliness if support was not reciprocated. As parents and teachers often represent different perspectives, priorities and values the Principals regularly felt they had to negotiate and mediate between competing interests. The participants often found these experiences challenging as they had to keep a professional distance from others in order to be viewed as neutral when solving disputes.

Smith (2007) and Stephenson and Bauer (2010) documented Principals' experiences of isolation and suggested that such feelings have a significant impact when predicting whether a Principal will burnout or survive. Brennan and Mac Ruairc (2011) and Riley (2012, 2015) came to a similar conclusion as they noted Principals had higher levels of stress and their wellbeing suffered to such an extent that there was almost double the rate of work related mental ill-health for the Principal profession when compared to most other industries. The participants in this study,

with their varying levels of experience in their career as Primary School Principals, seem to validate the findings about isolation and burnout.

Howard and Mallory (2008) found that most Principals struggled to find the time for face-to-face time with their peers, which only exacerbated the feelings of isolation and potential burnout. However, the consensus of the participants in this study were that those Principals currently involved in collegial networking welcomed opportunities to engage in discussions around coping with stress and problem solving, as well as building camaraderie with other professionals. This finding supports the assertion by Smith (2007) and Williams (2016) that wellbeing in a professional life requires relationships which are rewarding and positive.

Blackmore (2013) believes that a focus on emotions and the need for shared knowledge and support should be a part of the discussion, rather than the focus on the individual leader that is so often discussed in emotional intelligence research. The comments of participants in this study supported this point of view, saying that having co-producers of knowledge may allow for a greater understanding of different cultural values, histories and social norms.

Relationships with Others

Brackett, Rivers and Salovey (2011) and Quinn and Wilemon (2009) concluded that success as a Principal is dependent on the ability to communicate ideas and interact with other people. The role emotional intelligence plays in the interpersonal components of a Principals' role, such as understanding and fostering key relationships with others, seemed to be the most comfortable aspect of discussion for the respondents.

One of the findings from this study was that the Principals felt that in understanding the emotions at work it was an essential skill to observe and infer the internal emotional responses in others through the reading of facial expressions, tone of voice and body language. On this basis participants built their trust in those people in the educational community. This finding corroborated the studies by Porter (2010), Momeni (2009), Bardach (2008), Bohrer (2007), Fielding (2007), Rosete & Ciarrochi (2005) and Cook (2006), which explored the way in which these aspects of emotional intelligence are implicated in the person-centered nature of the work of Principals.

Although the respondents saw the need to better understand and support others as a positive personal attribute, Blackmore (2013) raised significant concerns

about this. She argued that research on understanding the emotions of others is centered on the need to manage others. This study found that Principals do perceive a key component of their day-to-day lives as the need to manage others in their community. Being able to use emotional understanding to manage others meant the Principals saw themselves as effective leaders, which aligns with the findings of O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver & Story (2011) and Platsidou (2010).

Empathy, and the ability to understand the concerns of a parent, was seen as vital amongst the participants as it informed a deliberate, reflective decision-making component of the position of school leader. Without it, the Principals noted their concern that decisions could be made hastily and in the heat of the moment. They believed that developing respect for different perspectives was vital and by being sensitive and conscious of other people's needs then interpersonal relationships could be consolidated. Complementing this emotional intelligence is the need for a relationship with self.

Relationship with Self

The role self-regard, a vital component of personal identity, was discussed as it plays out in the daily lives of Principals, how it can be best developed and what role particular conditions play in forming a healthy self-regard. This study found that a sense of powerlessness, often driven by a lack of experience or systemic issues, meant that Principals' self-regard was negatively impacted.

One important aspect of the relationship with self that emerged was self-regulation. Goleman (1998) explained self regulation as being able to recognise one's own emotions, control one's reactions and to use rationality and composure when making decisions in trying circumstances. Nyree suggested that expressing emotions can have a detrimental effect but that any limitations can be addressed if a Principal has intrapersonal emotional intelligence. She spoke about the need to control her facial expressions

The critiques of emotional intelligence, particularly by Blackmore (2013) that emotional literacy may be brought into play to suppress emotional response, was found to occur in this study. Conformity and consensus was evident in the feedback Nyree was from an experienced Principal, was asked to work on her own facial expressions so that her expressions of emotions were expected and viewed as acceptable.

This study found that this intrapersonal component of emotional intelligence was considered essential by the respondents in being able to deal with pressure and stress, particularly if Principals are to avoid burnout.

The participants spoke about the need to understand their own emotions and the ability to understand their own feelings, desires and a sense of one's self as important when discussing elements that can lead to strong self-efficacy. Knowledge of one's self was viewed as being essential to decision-making because an intrapersonal emotional intelligence takes in to account self-awareness, self-regulation, self-fulfillment and self-regard (Brinia, Zimianiti and Panagiotopoulos, 2014).

One of the implications of this study is the need for the Principals to be reflective and to engage in accurate self-assessment so that they are aware of their strengths whilst also addressing potential areas of weakness. The participants substantiated the view put forward by Retna (2011), who found a desire existed amongst Principals to engage in a continuous conversation with their inner self. Her participants highlighted the need to question and understand the merits and values of their experiences and the participants of this study expressed a similar perception.

The participants explored notions of self-awareness in detail. Some of the Principals discussed situations in which they were not in control of their emotions and how this had caused a situation to escalate. Consequently, the ability to acknowledge one's limitations in such a situation gave a reason to reflect and develop this aspect of their emotional intelligence.

However, the participants in this study felt that developing one's own emotional intelligence depended on feeling supported. A sense of self-fulfillment was difficult to achieve, according to the Principals, if they felt isolated and alone as they dealt with a substantial amount of pressure. Some Principals explored the idea of seeking out the children in their care and engaging in positive interactions or, in some cases, sharing success with administration staff as ways to experience a greater level of support.

Given the emotional experiences and perspectives of the Principals who participated in this study, the results suggest the need for research centered around the emotional labour of Principals needs to include a consideration of the self-regard of Principals. Research from this study illustrates the need to better support Principals in

their role by ensuring that Principals who have a low self-regard are given opportunities to engage in a supportive environment with their peers so that they can develop their sense of self.

Support and Mentoring

The participants in this study felt that in addition to engaging in the self-assessment required for self-awareness, there was a benefit in participation in collegial support programs. In coping with experiences of powerlessness, the Principals noted that the opportunity to meet with other Principals supported the development of their identity, reduced feelings of isolation and the burden of having to maintain a professional distance from parents, staff and the children. Neither work nor home were found to be places in which Principals felt they could process and understand the emotional demands of their work, with one beginning Principal in this study referring to his work space as being “back inside these four walls”, a statement that reflects a confining rather than supportive workplace.

Several participants mentioned the need for a professional distance from their teaching staff, particularly when it came to the idea of expressing or sharing their feelings with others. A theme that emerged in this study was that Principals often felt this separation was difficult due to the way in which their professional career had shifted, from one in which collegiality in the staffroom was a sought out, welcome form of support compared to their current position, which felt lonely and isolating at times when support was most sought after. These feelings are part of the emotional labour of Principals, which aligns with extensive research that suggests Principals operate within a complex environment of interconnectedness (Dalgıç & Bakioğlu, 2014; Mills and Niesche, 2014; Norrish, Williams, O'Connor & Robinson, 2013; Brennan and Mac Ruairc, 2011; Kelchtermans, Piot and Ballet, 2011; MacBeath, 2011; Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008; Gronn, 2009; Kelchtermans, 2007; Beatty, 2007a; Beatty, 2007b).

The opportunity to process their emotions through the use of a collegial program was seen as the best avenue for support. This study found that by creating a sense of belonging and moving away from the notion of ‘heroic’ leadership, some of the Principals’ were able to better understand their contexts, emotions and their own professional identities.

Supportive colleagues were found to act as the best way to address feelings of anxiety and isolation. Tuckey and Hayward (2011) found that camaraderie was an emotional resource as Principals could express themselves to their peers without the fear of negative consequences. Williams (2016) noted that positive feelings of competence and increased confidence can result from relationships that develop through camaraderie. Previous research by Stephenson and Bauer (2010) showed that when pressure and stress are not relieved then burn out and chronic exhaustion are not uncommon.

Some participants noted difficulty in participating in mentoring programs, perhaps due to low self-efficacy; other reasons offered were related to time, location and workload. However, some Principals noted that their self-regard was low and this precluded them from wanting to meet with their peers. This is an alarming response. If a Principal lacks the confidence to seek out peer relationships then a lack of emotional support may contribute to feelings of powerlessness, despair, dissatisfaction and doubt, which may be further compounded by the daily pressures from wider emotional economy (Blackmore, 2013) of their school. The influence of available time, location, workload and aspects of emotional intelligence, such as self-regard, appear to be important factors in understanding a Principals' perspective on situations that involve emotions at work in their day-to-day lives.

Further research needs to be undertaken in order to assess the degree to which collegial networks can help facilitate improved intrapersonal skills.

Structural Factors

Lastly, this study identified some factors that may influence a Principal's sense of self. Although not a central focus of this study, systemic factors, such as the way in which some Principals were given an Assistant Principal to work with, impacted upon Principals' feelings of fear and powerlessness. These will be discussed briefly here, because they offer an avenue for further research.

Ava, Nyree and Phillip discussed their isolation and personal struggle in their roles and given that all three Principals worked without an Assistant Principal due to policy decisions, further consideration of the role local conditions play in Principals' wellbeing is needed. Goleman (2005) sees the concept of an emotionally intelligent leader as being able to deal with and manage their own stress levels in challenging

circumstances; endurance and self-discipline is needed in order for an individual to be able to deal with decision-making situations that may not be viewed as favourable by all of the people in a learning community. However, according to Blackmore (2013), the emphasis on these factors overlooks the role contextual or structural outside-school factors play in the way an emotionally intelligent leader is able to cope with stress and the way in which identities amongst Principals are formed. The Principals in this study indicated that issues of power/powerlessness also affected their perception of support, so there is a need to acknowledge the unequal power and knowledge relations that exist in education and governance.

In this study, an important response from the participants was the emotional toll that internal and external pressures place on their role. This has been widely acknowledged in several studies (Riley, 2012; Jahanian, Zolfarhari & Bagherpour, 2012). Interestingly, powerlessness emerged as a key point as Principals grappled with their need to lead and be seen as a successful leader who can solve a wide range of issues.

Community histories and particular local conditions meant that the context in which Principals found themselves played a role in the emotions they experienced at work.

Implications for Practice

The Principals who were involved in this study acknowledged the impact that pressure, stress and loneliness can have on their ability to make thoughtful, considered decisions. Their interpersonal skills, each Principal felt, were well established as they used emotional intelligence to understand the emotional needs and wants of others in their learning community. However, understanding the emotions one feels and the impact this has on their professional identity is an area that needs to be explored in more depth if Department of Education and Training try to address the low rates of Leading Teachers and Assistant Principals who are choosing to further their careers by becoming Principals.

This study shows that there is a need to re-examine the support that is put in place, particularly the need for collegial programs as the participants in this study felt those programs were the most effective.

Henry (2010) found that Departments of Education are increasingly aware of the issues surrounding anxiety, stress and seclusion of Principals and have sought to

use mentorship programs to provide support and best prepare Principal candidates or those who are beginning their career. However, the Principals in this study discussed the unequal power balance between mentors and mentees in the mentoring programs which meant that mentors did not take in to account the stress, pressure and isolation that mentees, at times, felt.

A recurring theme was the need to have collegial networks that could act as a form of support for Principals with various lengths of service.

The participants' responses indicate the need to explore the relational practice of emotions and, rather than viewing them as individualized attributes, there is a need to understand the way in which Principals establish their professional identities through their interactions with colleagues.

The participants also discussed the support being provided by the Department of Education and Training. There may be a disconnect between the support that Government Departments intend to provide and the actual sense of support that Principals feel. A frequent message was the network meetings of the Department were too large and too impersonal.

There would be significant policy revision to occur if research were to demonstrate a greater sense of isolation and stress amongst those Principals without an Assistant Principal. Those participants in this study indicated an added sense of structural loneliness in their day-to-day experiences than those of their peers. The responses from the participants implies that those who are without an Assistant Principal face systemic stress. Would the addition of an Assistant Principal in all schools allow for a principal to express and communicate their understanding of self more readily and decrease the levels of burnout that occur?

In this study those Principals who engage actively with their colleagues reported a stronger sense of professional identity, indicating that the self-efficacy of Principals should be a priority in leadership programs. Further research is needed in the role that this plays in the self-efficacy of Principals.

Some Principals in this study were establishing their own collegial networks. However, a significant theme to emerge in the discussion around collegial support was that of self-regard, and the lack of confidence several of the participants felt in seeking or establishing relationships with other Principals. Whilst collegial support needs to be flexible, this study suggests an area for further research that would expand our understanding of emotions on an intrapersonal level – particularly as it related to

self-regard - and how this could lead to higher participation rates amongst Principals in collegial support networks. Once this is better understood, programs which engage Principals, and which are centered on their emotions at work, could address ways in which Principals with a low self-regard have strategies or avenues for support so that their feelings of stress and isolation can be reduced.

Limitations of the Study

As a researcher involved in the education process, there is a risk that a bias stems from my own experiences when I interpret data, seeing explanations and interpretations that are already familiar to me. Whilst this bias is a possibility/probability, it may also serve as a strength of this study. I may be more likely to see and understand things that an outsider would not. Having experienced the emotions that attend sitting in the car for 30 minutes to try to process the emotions of the day when there has been little to no support, I might be more likely to attend to such accounts in the words of others and probe more deeply into the participants' experiences and feelings about such events.

A limitation of this study is the sample size. Such a small sample, a common limitation of a qualitative study, means that generalization of the findings is not possible. Additionally, having four of the six Principals conduct a second interview rather than all six was a limitation. However, this study does not seek to extrapolate the findings to all Principals. Rather, a qualitative study such as this offers an opportunity to explore an issue in-depth, which is not easily achieved through questionnaires and surveys.

Another limitation is the lack of cultural diversity of the participants. Seeking Principals with different cultural backgrounds may shed some light on the role diversity plays in the understanding of the emotions Principals' face at their respective work places.

This study was also limited in that it did not attend to gender. Blackmore (2013) suggests that the rise of emotional intelligence literature has led to emotions being treated as an individual capacity that are not culturally constituted or gender specific, and so further study is needed to better understand the way emotions are enacted in the wider context of gender and culture.

Ultimately, this study found that a greater understanding of the role context plays in the day-to-day lives of Principals is needed. The notion that emotional

intelligence has ‘universal’ attributes for all individuals, regardless of context, appears to simplify the role of a Principal.

Further research could assist in understanding whether self-regard is an issue for a wider range of Principals. Whilst the responses of the Principals in this study suggest that the setting in which a Principal finds him or herself play a role in their emotions at work, a larger sample size may give more insights. The community expectations of a school, and the backgrounds of parents, seemingly play a role in the lives of Principals. Additionally, the policy decision to have schools with a particular student population receive an Assistant Principal appears to impact Principals. A larger study may provide a better understanding as to whether self-regard is driven by context, the role that experience plays and whether gender and cultural backgrounds play a role.

Final Words

It is important to note that this study used a small sample size and reflects only a partial understanding of Principals’ understandings of situations that involve emotions at work and the role of emotional intelligence. What is clear, however, is that the role of a Principal in Primary Schools across Victoria is a complex, challenging day-to-day proposition as they navigate a wide range of relationships in their leadership roles. In having to balance a wide assortment of roles – be it a leader of teachers, a financial officer, a manager of health and safety – there are many components that can lead to anxiety and tension.

An understanding of emotions, particularly in how they are enacted with different people, may be helpful for Principals to improve their leadership skills. It is believed that emotionally intelligent leaders may have better relationships with staff, parents and children and that this will enable stress and pressure to be reduced.

However, training of Principals around emotions also requires a deeper focus on intrapersonal skills. Providing opportunities for Principals to engage in developing their self-awareness may assist them in finding strategies that can be utilised when they are feeling under pressure. Self-awareness emerged as an important theme in this study as self-regulation and an understanding of how one was responding provided Principals with an opportunity to navigate the complex ‘outside-‘ and ‘inside-school perspectives’. Being able to engage in self-reflection may be confronting – no one

likes to admit his or her failings – but it can also be a powerful way to develop and strengthen a Principals’ understanding of their emotions.

However, this needs to be done with caution. Reinforcing components of intrapersonal skills need to be done with a full consideration of the relational practice of education. While there is a place for emotional intelligence in a discussion around emotions the responses of the Principals indicate that an understanding of contextual factors is important too. For example, the role of mentoring in supporting Principals in achieving a sense of ‘belonging’ is not straight forward. Reducing emotional intelligence to an individual acquisition of competency, even within a mentoring framework, would ignore the difference in power and the manner in which power relations shape the way emotions are understood.

Ignoring systemic factors in any program may only lead to further reinforce the ‘heroic individual’ leadership paradigm. This could add to the pressure Principals feel as they might believe they need to solve all of the problems in their situation in isolation. Identifying the factors that influence a Principal in feeling a low self-regard, and having resources to address this, need to be a priority. What role do specific local conditions play in impacting the self-regard Principals have? Do systemic factors, such as the policy decision not to provide an assistant principal, impact a Principal’s self-regard?

Exploring emotions in both an individual sense and through professional relationships is vital. Without an improvement in emotional resources for Principals it is clear that the demands and pressures placed on Principals are not sustainable. If we want to effectively address the findings of Riley (2015) then we need to understand the emotions Principals experience in their day-to-day lives and what strategies, both individually and collectively, can best support them.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Ethics Approval from Monash University



MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date: 22 July 2013
Project Number: CF13/2116 – 2013001101
Project Title: Exploring Emotional Experiences and Support for Beginning Primary School Principals
Chief Investigator: Dr Adam Bertram
Approved: From: 22 July 2013 To: 22 July 2018

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.**
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.



Professor Nip Thomson
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Assoc Prof Leonard Cairns, Mr Craig Goodwin

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831
Email muhrec@monash.edu <http://www.monash.edu.au/researchoffice/human/>
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

Appendix B – Ethics Approval from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development



Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Strategy and Review Group

2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne, Victoria 3002
Telephone: +61 3 9637 2000
DX 210083
GPO Box 4367
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

2013_002067



Dear Mr Goodwin

Thank you for your application of 17 July 2013 in which you request permission to conduct research in Victorian government schools and/or early childhood settings titled *Exploring emotional experiences and support for beginning primary school principals*.

I am pleased to advise that on the basis of the information you have provided your research proposal is approved in principle subject to the conditions detailed below.

1. The research is conducted in accordance with the final documentation you provided to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
2. Separate approval for the research needs to be sought from school principals and/or centre directors. This is to be supported by the DEECD approved documentation and, if applicable, the letter of approval from a relevant and formally constituted Human Research Ethics Committee.
3. The project is commenced within 12 months of this approval letter and any extensions or variations to your study, including those requested by an ethics committee must be submitted to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development for its consideration before you proceed.
4. As a matter of courtesy, you advise the relevant Regional Director of the schools or governing body of the early childhood settings that you intend to approach. An outline of your research and a copy of this letter should be provided to the Regional Director or governing body.
5. You acknowledge the support of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in any publications arising from the research.
6. The Research Agreement conditions, which include the reporting requirements at the conclusion of your study, are upheld. A reminder will be sent for reports not submitted by the study's indicative completion date.
7. If DEECD has commissioned you to undertake this research, the responsible Branch/Division will need to approve any material you provide for publication on the Department's Research Register.



Appendix C - Online Survey Questions To Be Answered

Background Information

1. Gender Female ☐ Male ☐
2. Age Group Under 40 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50-59 ☐
3. How many years have you worked in schools?
- None ☐
- Less than 3 years ☐
- 3-5 years ☐
- 6-10 years ☐
- 11-15 years ☐
- 16-20 years ☐
4. How many years have you held a formal leadership role (i.e. Leading teacher)?
- None ☐
- Less than 3 years ☐
- 3-5 years ☐
- 6-10 years ☐
- 11-15 years ☐
- 16-20 years ☐
5. How many years experience do you have working as a Principal?
- This is my first year ☐
- 1-2 years ☐
- 3-5 years ☐
- 6+ years ☐
6. Before taking on the role of Principal I had a strong role model as an example.
- Yes ☐ Go to Q7
- No ☐ Go to Q8
7. This role model gave me assistance in making the transition to being a Principal.
- Yes ☐
- No ☐
8. I completed in a university course on leadership prior to being a Principal.
- Yes ☐
- No ☐
9. I was motivated to become a Principal because..

--

School management

10. In this section you will find statements about the management of your current school. Please indicate the frequency with which you participate in these activities.

	Never	Rarely	Often	Very Often
I create the teaching goals of the school at the start of each term				
I ensure the professional development activities of teachers fulfill these teaching goals				
I observe instruction in the classroom				
I use student performance results to develop the school's educational goals				
I use staff feedback to develop the school's educational goals				
I give teachers suggestions on how they can develop their teaching				
Teachers approach me to discuss their goals				
If there is a problem in a classroom I take the initiative to discuss matters				
When a teacher shares a classroom problem, I solve the problem for them				
When a teacher shares a classroom problem, we solve the problem together				
I inform teachers about possibilities for professional development that align with their personal goals				
I conduct information sessions with parents on a related to the goals of the school				
I meet with parents if they have an issue from the classroom				
I act as a go-between for parents and teachers if there are significant issues from a meeting				

In the box below, describe how you “feel” (i.e. your emotions) when you need to communicate on these issues? Are you at ease or can it be difficult? Comment.

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11. In this section you will find statements about your experiences with your staff.
Please indicate your response.

	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
When I began my role as Principal I knew what to expect			
I felt well-equipped to assist the teachers in their professional development			
Observing classroom instruction and learning was a priority for me when I began			
Prior to going into each classroom, the teacher and I would select a specific goal			
Establishing trust with the staff was of paramount importance			
Instructional leadership is an area that suffers as there are many other expectations in my role			
I believe designing and implementing school goals are an important aspect of my job			
Providing staff with feedback and supporting their learning is an important aspect of my job			
When I began this position the staffing had been consistent for many years			
I wanted to be respected and accepted by the staff			
I find it easier to implement meaningful performance goals with my staff			
I feel confident when communicating the standards expected of the teaching staff			

Prior to beginning as a Principal, what skills and observations should a person be made aware of and develop so that they can communicate effectively with their staff?

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12. In this section you will find statements about your support as a Principal. Please indicate your response.

	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I was able to call on a mentor or another Principal			

to share ideas when I began this role			
To prepare for this position I believe a Principal needs to undergo training			
Time is a limiting factor when working with a mentor			
A mentor should provide ready-made solutions to their inexperienced partner			
I seek support from other Principals who can understand the pressures of this job			
There is great value in being able to network with other Principals			
I am able to rely on support from family and friends			
I think there needs to be greater support for new Principals			

Do you have any feedback or thoughts on how greater support can be given to new Principals?

13. This section concludes the survey. Please indicate your response to the following statements.

	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My confidence when working with parents has improved since I began			
When things are going smoothly I am prepared to implement change if it is necessary			
External pressures, such as the MySchool website, have made my role more difficult			
The demands of my position have grown in the time I have been a Principal			
I feel valued by the wider school community			
If a member of my staff wanted to become a Principal I would encourage him/her			
Based on my own experiences I would happily act a mentor for that member of staff			

You are invited to share any concluding statements.

Appendix D – Sample of Semi-Structured Interview Questions for 1st Interviews

Beginning as a Principal

- What were your incentives/motivations for stepping up into the role of a Principal?
- Did you have any preconceptions of the job? Describe some of your expectations.
- In what way did having a role model of a good Principal assist you in making the decision to become a Principal?
- Prior to accepting the role of Principal did you undertake or participate in a program whereby difficult conversations can and were learned so that you could learn to deal with sticky situations?

The early days

- When applying for a position as Principal what did the interview questions discuss?
- Did you feel well-equipped when dealing with a new learning community?
- Did you seek support within the learning community and, if so, who?
- Why did you seek that particular person's support?

Emotions, day-to-day and emotional intelligence

- What was your vision when you began?
- When you began in your current position was there a change in the staffing? How would you describe the degree of change with the staff?
- Did this affect the way you were perceived when you began?
- In that initial period, how did you develop and implement meaningful performance goals with your staff? How do Principals maintain good social relations with people in their community?
- What role does the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions play in the development of relationships?

- What interpersonal qualities assist Principals in achieving better social relations with adults?
- Compared to your beginning role as a Principal, in what ways has your approach towards developing meaningful performance goals changed?
- In the last 3-5 years that you have been a Principal, in what manner has your role evolved?
- Is it a challenge to share your thoughts and remain open with your staff?
- Are you comfortable in opening up decisions and issues to employee participation?
- Have you felt any pressure to project a certain image around emotions at work?
- Do you feel well-equipped to communicate the standards expected to others so that they can carry out their work?
- A school can be an emotionally charged environment. How do you support the staff with perceived external pressures, such as the MySchools website?
- Is collaboration with teachers, deputies and the department rewarding by making your role more manageable?
- How do you become a school leader that is the facilitator of change and someone who effectively supports teachers in their work with students?
- Have does one with less than 5 years experience implement and create the ideal situation to foster a community of learners?

Leadership questions

- Do you believe that school leaders should adjust their educational perspective when entering a new environment?
- In your opinion is it possible for Principals to set educational goals that override administrative requirements?
- To what extent do you take into account and promote adult learning?

- Is this an important part for you in developing and establishing sound relationships with your staff?
- How often are you able to engage with teachers to share in professional dialogue so that knowledge is shared, expanded and created?
- Beatty wrote in 2007 that leadership for whole school renewal requires emotionally safer spaces for learning and growing together, particularly as it relates to new visions of school leadership in the forms of collaborative inquiry. What can help a Principal perceive emotions in others to create these safer spaces?
- In what way do you promote the strength of the organisation rather than the weaknesses?
- Is there an emphasis placed on a shared collegial obligation regarding the goals of the school?

The wider community – ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’

- What were your expectations of involvement of the parenting community prior to beginning as a Principal?
- Did you feel confident when working with parents? Has this changed over time?
- If you were met with challenges when engaging with the community how did you cope with this?
- If things are working smoothly do you feel as though you can change things?
- How were you able to develop trust between the wider community and the school?
- Do you feel valued by the school council/board and the wider community?
- When have you experienced tension conflicting ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’?
- Is there a tension between wanting to ‘belong’ to either ‘outside-’ and ‘inside-school perspectives’ and loneliness?

Mentoring

- Did you have a mentor prior to taking on the role of Principal?

- Were you given a mentor once you began to lead the community?
- Were you given assistance in finding a mentor or was it your own initiative?
- Was time a limiting factor in your efforts to learn from a mentor?
- Did the mentor provide you with ready-made solutions or did they guide you and develop your ability to look at a problem and find a suitable solution?
- How does mentoring of Principals assist in understanding emotions in varying contexts?
- What role does the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions play in the development of (mentoring) relationship?
- How might seeking collegiality be important to some Principals?

Final thoughts

- On reflection, do you believe that your role prior to being a Principal prepared you for the position you undertook?
- Did you feel emotionally prepared when you began this role?
- What events in your day-to-day work illicit positive emotions?
- Describe an event that may cause a negative reaction.
- Are you able to rely on multiple sources of support, such as a family member, partner or another school leader?
- In what way does this assist you in your role?
- Do you believe there is a lack of support for individuals who move into the position of a Principal?
- Do you see value in meeting with other Principals to share ideas and discuss issues?
- Are you able to undertake professional development to ensure your own growth as a leader?

- How do you alleviate occupational stress?
- Why would intrapersonal intelligence – the ability to understand when and how to use your feelings – be considered important for Principals?
- Are there members of your school for whom becoming a Principal is a desire? If so, what coaching or mentoring are you able to provide?
- Do you believe coaching and mentoring opportunities for deputies who wish to become a Principal is important? Provide a reason why.
- Are there particular programs that you might suggest a deputy undertake prior to becoming a Principal?

Appendix E – Full interview transcript

Interview Transcript #2 with Phillip

Interviewer: So today we are going to follow up our interview from 12 months ago.

I and Head: Laughter

I: We're going to focus a bit more on emotional intelligence

H: Oh yeah.

I: And the emotional aspects of your role.

H: Laughter.

I: So I'll start with the very first question. How would you describe your approach to leadership...

H: Ah.

I: At this school?

H: Okay. Um, well I came from... well I think when you are currently at a school and you get to the leaders, leadership position, you already know what leadership was beforehand then you can't really, for the staff I think it is very difficult to move them from one leadership style AND you knowing that leadership style and then you coming in and not taking into account that previous leadership style. So I think in terms of that I was sort of committed to continuing that sort of leadership style as much as possible. Um... to make the transition for staff as smooth as possible, or as seamless as possible. Um, but um...

I: So then did the emotions of the other people, the other staff members, play a role in your decision around your leadership approach?

H: Yeah. Definitely. And I think consideration needs to be put forward in terms of being at a Girls School as well and predominantly working with females. Um... and I think if you came in, if I came into the position, and adopted a very different leadership style to the person, Harriet, who was in that position beforehand, then I think the transition, the staff, would have gone BOOHHOOO, okay, and so once again, being predominantly female, I think there was a strong consideration in me doing what I had to do to transition staff in terms of good leadership and then slowly adopting more of my own personal learning style, which is not the same as the previous one anyway but it was a good mix of things. Definitely. Um... and yeah...

I: So you've gradually, I suppose, moved towards your own practices and leadership?

H: Yeah. I think I'll see that a bit more next year with staff and then I'll be moving forward and making decisions, um, a lot more I think. Um, I think there were a lot of distractions this year and I didn't really get in a good position to say "Hey, we're doing this, hey we're doing this." I think, in the end, I sort of.. um... y'know... didn't want to make those decisions. But next year, definitely. I think next year in terms of adopting a really clear strategy, in terms of a vision for the school, needs to be adopted. And me paving the way for people to basically jump on the bus.

I: In terms of developing that vision for the school, where does the consideration for emotional practice, or emotional intelligence, come into it?

H: From a staff point of view or from my point of view?

I: Both.

H: Oh, okay. Um, in terms of emotional facilitation of the staff it would be... well... they have to be part of the process I guess, in terms of professionally sort of getting on board and being emotionally supportive of the direction of the school. I think they need to be involved, somewhat. I don't know to what capacity that would be, um... but certainly in the initial stages it would be blending their ideas together and sort of linking all that in, definitely, involving that and involving them. I think the leadership team, Compass, is the first port of call. We'll be discussing things in Compass first. Involving them in the decisions and informing them about what's going on. Having a clear vision for Compass, and Compass having that input first, so it wouldn't be good for me to go to the staff and say "This is the direction we're heading," and not bring it to Compass first. D'ya know what I mean? The team leaders will be the first... uggg... the people that will be driving things, y'know, classroom... classroom based onwards. So I think that's really important. I think they need to be emotionally and professionally engaged in everything else and then move that message forward.

I: So what does the term emotional intelligence mean to you?

H: Um.... being emotionally engaged, um, having a positive sort of attitude – as much as possible – and, um, having that... having that commitment from staff, basically.

I: So are there certain traits and characteristics you, as Head of Junior School, need to have for you to be emotionally intelligent?

H: That's a good question. That I need to have... well... I need to be a good listener. Particularly at a girls' school... I'm getting hot now! [Laughter] I know where you're getting at. I guess there's stuff I want teachers to be displaying in terms of emotional intelligence that I need to display first. So in terms of modelling that engagement, in

modelling their involvement and taking an interest in them, not only as educators but as people as well. Um...

I: How do you do that then? What intelligences do need to be able to facilitate that? You said a good listener before. Are there other traits that you think are important?

H: Yeah, definitely. Definitely. Compassion. Yeah, I think it's important to understand your staff and know when they are under pressure and need any support. Y'know I keep coming back to, and if it is right who knows, I just keep coming back to I am at a girls' school and I've got 98% of the staff girls. And I've got young girls as well. I've got a young generation of girls, and next year I'll have two more, and how I relate to them on a 44 year old sort of level. I don't want to be the daddy, that doesn't sit comfortably with me. I... I don't want to be... [sigh] I want them to be emotionally engaged and all those sorts of things. I don't know, I'm going to have to continue to explore that.

This year we have had two graduates, and I think that's been easier for me in terms of emotionally, sort of, developing a good relationship with them. So I guess in order to develop their own emotional intelligence I need to build that good repour with them by having an open office, an open door office. I think they expect that sort of stuff, particularly the young ones. I don't want to be seen as some fuddy-duddy that is annoyed when people are knocking on the door all the time. I just don't think that fits in with a school these days anyway because people come and go.

I wasn't really enjoying it but I was enjoying it by the end of the year. I could see that staff were trusting me a little bit more 'cause they knew I was here, I could sit down with them. I have a desk as well so I've made a conscious effort not to sit behind the desk, as the big head honcho or come over and sit at the side, so I sit here with people so that I can sit down and read their body language and facial expressions more clearly. I want people to be able to talk to me at the same level, I think that's really important. So I guess that all contributes to their emotional intelligence.

I: Can you explain why?

H: If I can be at the same level as my staff, and the parents too I guess, then I can read people more readily and, hopefully, they might... um... well they could open up more. Being at the same level means it is easier to read people, I can get to know people in the community if I don't sit behind a table as the big head honcho. I can work out where I need to push, where I need to listen and where I just need to offer support. Some staff I feel like... I don't know if this is the right term... but I can push

them and they'll respond positively but if I asked the same thing of say Jan and Jane then they'd become overwhelmed and feel pressure. And that would then impact everyone else as they sat down during recess and lunch to chat.

I: What role does self-perception play?

H: Well, I hope staff see me as still an educator, not just as a leader. That should all contribute to their emotional stability I guess.

I: When new staff come in, is there a part of the thought process that considers whether they would fit into the community of teachers here and display emotional intelligence, like compassion and understanding, which you mentioned before?

H: Yeah, well the questions that we ask don't actually cover those areas but I guess you've just got to read between the lines a little bit and see if they are open to that.

I: Do you want me to pause?

H: Yeah, please.

[Phone rings. Intermission]

I: Ok, so let's take a step back to when you began the role, which was 12 months ago basically. From then until now, how has your emotional intelligence evolved?

H: [laughter] Wow! Gee...

I: Or changed?

H: Gee, changed. Oh yeah, definitely.

I: Do you have a chance to reflect upon yourself?

H: Yeah, absolutely. Not very intelligent! [Laughter] I think I had the honeymoon period for the first term when, um... not so much staff but families didn't sort of come and talk to me or come into the office too much. And I think since half year, since Term 3 and 4, umm... issues... ugh... junior school issues, whole school issues, lots of things have cropped up. Parents that had been holding onto stuff and felt like that they couldn't communicate, y'know, for whatever reason beforehand. Having... having... not so many but a number of different issues crop up and not take it personally was difficult. Um...

I: How did you work through that?

H: Oh God! It was difficult because the first one... the first couple, I thought I took very personally because I liked the school, I liked the staff and everything else and to try and sort of solve those issues you have to sort of work with people, with the staff, on a personal level for example. So that was quite emotional and, I guess, having to

have to do that for the first time, the third time and fourth time, you just know talking to your staff generally about things... well you just sort of get a little bit hardened by it. Hardened I mean by being more experienced at not getting so emotional and not getting so... emotional for me, it's difficult, because I was getting emotional because people were telling me they weren't happy with the school and I sort of haven't had much experience with that before. Thinking that everyone was happy and then going to a staff member that, y'know, these people have got an issue with and communicating these issues and then, sort of, expressing themselves personally and emotionally as well. And then me having to y'know work through that and then having to work through family and get a good outcome for all those particular things.

I: Yes...

H: That was a real challenge.

I: So going back to those first couple of conversations that really hit you between the eyes, what did you do to cope with that? Was it that you had quiet time on the drive home? Or was it that you could speak with someone that could support you?

H: Yeah... look the first experiences... well the first experiences were, I guess for me, and I haven't got a deputy as well, but I use the Team Leaders a little bit to sort of talk with and sort of... sort of talk through some of the issues and things but then I got a bit hesitant about that because I didn't want to bombard them with some of the whole school, junior school issues when they are only Team Leaders for their 2 or 3 year groups as well, so they... what I was trying to do was involve them in a more holistic way in terms of involving them not... not only with the curriculum side of things but also the running of the Junior School if certain issues do arise. They got a sort of whole junior school impression of what was happening basically. I was very communicative with them in terms of not only junior school issues but issues that were bubbling away in their year levels as well as much as possible.

So I think I was learning to do that a lot more to be honest because the first couple I just took so personally I thought 'Oh shit,' Drive home, great, talk to my wife, great but then you sort of come back and you've got the 4 walls again and you're sort of got to start a fresh again. And that was difficult. So I still do that now...

I: In the previous interview you said that you were a classroom teacher, where you were a part of the staff, to being in this role where you are dealing with those outside forces that you are exposed to a lot more. Do you feel like you are being pulled in two different directions sometimes?

H: Yeah...

I: To resolve those issues?

H: Definitely. It was interesting at the start because I didn't know how much time to spend with staff, particularly... particularly at lunchtime. So lunchtime is a great session where you won't see me for the whole lunch time. I think it's a perception thing where leaders are, um... I don't feel like I am controlled by perception but... ugh... y'know first perceptions are long lasting impressions and I didn't want the staff to get the impression that I was going to be sitting at lunch for 40 minutes everyday when the staff are there, battling their guts out in the classroom, not saying that I'm not battling my guts out in the four walls here, but it's a perception thing to say that I still want to have a good relationship with staff, I still want to get to know them on a social level, y'know I want to take a real interest in them. I want them to stay, basically, so I want them to feel comfortable.

But the balance between doing that and doing that enough, as well as the perception that, y'know, you're going to be at lunch 40 minutes 5 times a day, the staff are thinking 'Oh, what's he doing?'

I: Yeah...

H: Do you know what I mean?

I: Mmmmm...

H: So I was really conscious of that. Recess, I try and do all of recess. I think that is perfect. 15 or 20 minutes but the lunchtime thing... I really didn't know to what extent to be there... I still haven't really worked that out yet. And I want the staff to see that I am accessible as well. That not only am I here for their work but that I am here for... them as well, if that makes sense.

I: Is it challenging then if a parent comes in and says 'I don't like Teacher A because of such and such'

H: Yeah...

I: And you, I suppose, don't feel like you have to defend Teacher A but that you also have to get that good outcome for the parent?

H: Yeah... [hesitates]

I: So do you feel that is a pressure on you?

H: Yeah, definitely. I think I am learning a lot more with the parent stuff, that the parent stuff I can get a good outcome by just talking through the issue. And I think I am getting better at that as well. Depending on.. obviously depending on what the

issue is I will try and work out very quickly if it a major issue or a bit of a minor issue that they need to have their ego stroked or whatever. Um... but I am always of the view that I'm very... that my leadership style is very open, that I will... if I have a parent come in that has a problem with a particular teacher then I will tell the teacher that this parent has come to me and I will never get to the situation where the teacher doesn't know that the parent has come in and that they are really annoyed or pissed off at something. I think that's part of my job, to give them that feedback and to be communicative.

So it's getting a good outcome and managing those types of issues and doing what's best for... well, obviously getting the best outcome for the student. And that comes back to knowing the emotional state of the teacher as well and, I guess, knowing a bit about that teacher, whether they're a first year teacher, a graduate, or whatever then the way that I approach it and include them in everything or tell them upfront 100% exactly what it was or I might give them the 50% version. It's about knowing people and how to communicate best with them.

I: You mentioned earlier about working at a girls school and you have to be mindful of the emotional side of things and having to adjust for that. Do you feel, when talking about a parent being unhappy with Teacher A, that you have to consider if gender plays a role in that or is it more about experience?

H: Look, I still think so and I think coming from a male perspective is.. I think one of the things, going back a step, one of the big things is that as a male I might not... well, as a male I might not think are big issues. You might be in the same position Craig. Ok. Early on I had one issue that was a personality clash with a teacher and I would've said "Look, you have good years and bad years and you know, you've just got to work through it all." If it was me as a parent, as a male, I would've got the student to work through it. Y'know, from a family perspective at home you empower, you've got to work it out, kind of. But I think, from a female point of view, this mother had to come in and tells me about this teacher. So a lot of the things does come back, I think, to being at a girls' school and probably working with females, and young females as well.

I'm not saying I am great at it or anything but... gee, it's a learning curve. The young people coming out of the courses. Ah, y'know, they are demanding. They want this, this and this. The staff add that layer of pressure, y'know, when they are demanding

of your time and they want everything on their plate, to a certain extent. Maybe that's the way of the world, I don't know.

I: Does that make your role more challenging?

H: Yep. Yeah, I think it does.

I: So in your role, when you are trying to negotiate with parents, staff... so you've got outside forces and inside school forces, then you've got your leadership demands too, do you feel ever feel loneliness in being in this role?

H: Well... yeah. Big time. I can tell you the previous situation with [previous Head of Junior School] was that she always wanted someone to work closely with and I think on the executive you have four people from Senior School and I know Mary, Deputy Principal, but we don't see her down here at all, offering no support. [Laughter]

She is put in these roles to supposedly help out but basically she is senior school orientated and gives me little support. I feel like there is an imbalance, the senior school is over represented. I have already brought that up with Fiona, I don't think what we have in place is adequate.

I: So does this contribute to your sense of isolation?

H: Yeah, it does. If I could bring in, for example, a Team Leader that might be interested in coming on deck, and there might be a learning curve on that and would be interested, I'd love for something like that to happen. It would allow me to discuss higher issues than I can in the current leadership team. Yeah, I think that would be good, but there is a distinct sense of isolation not only distance wise, not just physically, but maybe on an emotional level, y'know, umm...

I: Is there a lack of understanding?

H: Yeah, all the agenda items are senior school. I don't sometimes feel as though the needs of our primary school are considered. There is a lack of understanding, of appreciation even, in those meetings.

I: Let me tell you of an educational framework from Queensland that states that Principals should – and being head of Junior School this would apply to you – be emotionally mature.

H: Hmmm...

I: Now what does that term mean to you?

H: As a leader, a leader of a school, of a social organisation, so... to come back to that I guess you have to be socially mature, um.... Professionally mature. All those particular things. But in terms of that you need to be, you need enable... to be enabled

you need to take a position of other people, other stakeholders. Like, I think... I think, because I am a parent I am able to take a position as a parent because I have Jim and Bob at a primary school, so I can come from a parent perspective.

For example, I just spoke about Aya about, um, French for next year. And I need to place myself in the parents' position and say "Hey, it was delivered via newsletter at the start of the year. I was under the impression," and their key words were 'under the impression'. I had assumed everything was ok but I learnt not to assume anything, ever. Parent hat on, if I had learnt that we were doing a different language this way then I wouldn't be happy. Do you know what I mean? You have got to have an understanding of the different stakeholders, particularly parents.

I: Is that an understanding of others?

H: Yeah... yeah, a distinct understanding of others. It's important to try and follow different, or I guess a better word is to understand, different perspectives and this particular instance was as a result of poor communication. It's important to listen to parents, and those outside influences, so that they feel as though they are being heard and that difficult issues can be sorted out. Sometimes it is very uncomfortable... I guess that's the right word.

I: To fully appreciate that do you then need to have empathy do you think? Is that an emotional trait you need in this role?

H: Definitely, definitely. Yeah, absolutely. It comes back to being a good listener as well so that there is empathy as you run alongside them. If parents come to you with an issue, or even a staff member you know, then well I know that I've got to run alongside them and dissect that problem. Then we can come up with a clear sort of idea to solve that particular issue. I think that's really, really important. And I think with staff, it is easier. They still know me as a classroom teacher, I've still got the headset for classroom teaching.

I: Do you worry about losing that headset, say 5 years down the track...

H: Yeah, greatly.

I: And you are no longer viewed as a classroom teacher, you are viewed as the Head of the Junior School, so teachers may wonder if they can voice their concerns to you. Does that....

H: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think that will become my biggest issue and I need to have a presence in the classroom. I have to.

I: So is that how you will address that?

H: Have to. Absolutely.

I: Ok.

H: So, y'know, I think that's... that's got to happen. And it's so important for the staff, the parents and the whole school community to see me as a classroom... a leader but as a classroom teacher as well. And still have the ability to get into any classroom and deliver a good lesson. That's what they expect, and that is why you're in the position. You've established yourself in the classroom and you're probably considered a good classroom teacher, y'know, the way things travel in schools you go through the leadership roles and whatever. You are always considered a good, a good classroom practitioner and then up to a good leader. So effectively all of your Principals should be good classroom teachers.

I: Do you have a network of Head of Junior School principals?

H: No, no I haven't done that this year. And it's one of the big things I haven't got to, but I am.

I: Is it on your radar?

H: Yeah, it is. I've got the list of dates. [Laughter]

I: Why is it important for you to concern yourself with that?

H: It'd be good to talk to like-minded people, y'know, and look at similar situations where people are in the same boat. Hopefully I can establish a rapport, or a relationship, with someone so that I can take a load off, I guess, and see if my situation here is the same as what they're experiencing at their school, for example. Or there might be something there that they can give me that I can run with, for example. So I think that's really important and there are 4 meetings next year and I think, in our previous meeting, I was going to... (trails off)

I: Contact another Head. And did it happen?

H: Nope. And do you know why it didn't happen!?

I: No, no idea.

H: Cause I didn't feel confident enough. I didn't feel... I was on the verge of email, of phoning, I just... Even though I have met the Head of Junior School at Cow and Paddock on so many occasions, I still didn't have the confidence to call him up.

I: Do you feel as though you've moved past that now?

H: Oh, I don't know.

I: Going to those 4 meetings this year must mean...

H: Yeah... y'know, I reckon that if we do another interview after the first session with the Heads of Junior School it'd be interesting to see what my first impressions would be. I think I would still be so anxious, not only being new to the job, I'm still... I have doubts. I'm still in the rough. I am still wondering if it's the job for me. Just self-doubt, y'know what I mean?

I: So how do you work through that self-doubt? That's a pretty strong emotion.

H: I know, I know. It's... I guess it will get better with experience. Um.. and take for example this morning. I have got to put out a letter today that I've... I made these changes last year... but the Year 1's, I've changed their starting dates. So they're not starting with Year 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6's. I've pulled them back two days because I want to do some testing and assessment with them. So I thought I'd done everything in terms of ticking the boxes and telling everybody, the right people, and that it was happening next year, it was going in the diary. Liase with the principal, very happy, everything, and I get a phone call this morning... no hold one. Last week I sent a second reminder home telling the Year 1 parents and then this morning I found out marketing have sent information out contradicting what I've said. And once again you have the self-doubt coming back... what could I have done differently? This afternoon I have to write a letter to parents apologising for my mistake... so it's all these things that are new in my position that are having a significant affect on families and their holidays in this school community that's... there is a lot of self-doubt and really that is because schools are so complex a working environment that.. yeah... it's... yeah, it's just difficult... you think you've done the right thing but...

I: So as the Head of this Junior School do you need to understand the impact of your emotions on yourself?

H: Yeah, absolutely.

I: So where do you give yourself that break, or that time, obviously with the inside- and outside- demands things are go-go-go, so when do you actually find that time to process those emotions?

H: It's is outside of school, which is important. I work closely with Rhonda, our receptionist, and I think I was getting a little bit negative towards the end of last year. It was, again, another issue with another family that was giving me a lot of angst and I think, on reflection now, I was just reflecting on the holiday last week, that I was really getting into a negative state about this particular family and what they were doing and what they were saying about me. And for the very first time, towards the

end, it really got to me, right in the last two weeks. And everything Rhonda did, every time Rhonda would put another families name in the book and they wanted a meeting with you... and I just, y'know, I was just getting really negative. I was just... AAARRGGGHHH, not another, y'know, and I think she was picking up on it as well. She would say "I'm just so sorry, another family wants to...." AAARRRRGGGHHHH. So really, it got the better of me in the end, to be quite honest. It was quite negative...

I: So can emotions influence the way you interact with your staff?

H: Yeah, yeah.... I don't know whether the other staff picked up on it... and realised that I was getting so... quite negative towards the end. Yeah, but I think I need to be really mindful of that next year because with the reports and all the other problems that Rhonda was going through... I need to do that better, I need to manage that more effectively. I just wasn't helping. I need to stay more composed and deal with any distress better.

I: Can emotions influence the way you interact with the wider community, y'know, when it comes to dealing with parents and, I suppose, the staff over at your Senior School? Do emotions play a role in the way you interact?

H: Yeah, all the time. Absolutely, all the time. And I guess the biggest thing Craig is...um... time, my time. I wonder if I can manage my time better and I ask Rhonda all the time to help me to manage my time better. I think we made progress with that but it's when people that are – this won't sound very nice – but when people are insignificant and are taking up a stack of time, well emotionally, because I am growing in this position, you might find next year if that time is up I am moving on to something else.

So emotionally if I am at a stage where things are going ok or things aren't going ok, and 15 minutes I am still having to chat to the school nurse, then I will move on. I haven't done that this year. So when I grow in the role and I am no longer worried about initial impressions or whatever, that people will see a little bit of a different side of me. A more harder side. I think there just has to be, as part of a leader. I know that you have to be accessible but it needs to be at a manageable level.

I: So when you talk about time you obviously have to prioritise things.

H: Yeah...

I: So where does the time for processing your emotions and engaging in reflection fit in with all of these things....

H: [Laughter]

I: Is it up there on the scale, or less so?

H: Yeah, less so. Because my family is still young I want to get home early. So, like you said at the start, it's probably on the drive home. Cause some days I leave here and I'm going through everything that happened throughout the day and somehow I get home. So half an hour later... wow, how did I get home. So I guess... I guess that's an important part of that I guess. And then I've wound down enough to, y'know, interact positively with the four of them and my wife and... yeah, gee, there were some days there that were tough.

I: So do Principals need to be, or Heads of Junior School, need to be able to verbally express their emotions to someone? Is that a part of why you are going into that Heads meeting this year?

H: Yeah, I think so. And I think I am in a better position than what Glenda was. I have worked so hard at developing a rich, strong, positive relationship with my boss, to the extent that we are learning to open and trusting and to have all those good parts of any working professional relationship that we're working at at the moment.

At the start, if I had problems with staff, I wouldn't always be communicating that but by the end of the year it was a lot better, a hell of a lot better. It was "These are the problems I've got, what can I do to solve it?" And she was great.

I: So did you become more comfortable when expressing those emotions?

H: I did, but that... that took me a good six months. But I could see that she was... y'know, that she was interested and she'd talk through the issues and whatever really well.

I: What do you think will happen when you participate with this group, with the other Heads of Junior School, initially? Or do you think there is a fair degree of trust needed to express how you feel emotionally?

H: With my Principal it was trust. Yeah, trust. In the first session I would be... [makes typing notes sound effects] and I wouldn't be going in there saying 'This is what I do and oh, we're the best school.' It would be about being mindful and listening to people and getting to know them first, more than anything else. But it might take me all year to do that. But I've really got to get through not being comfortable, y'know. If I'm there with other Heads of Junior School who've been there for 10 or 15 years or whatever, I've got... got to get their trust...

[Interruption]

[Start recording again]

H: Yeah, it's all these little issues that just keep coming up that you're dealing with, in terms of families that have an issue, parents that have a perception. If we just had the students here, and the families banned, y'know, my job would be a lot easier. A hell of a lot easier.

I: It'd be a lot different!

H: Yeah it would be different. I imagine from a Government school perspective it might be more behavioural issues, spending more time with students. I think, in my position here, I have got to – somehow – build a good relationship with the community here to prevent them from coming into my office every two minutes. Do you now what I mean?

I: So what is it that you, as a Head of Junior School, need to do to build that good relationship?

H: Well, communication helps! I need to tell them exactly what is going, but like I said before, marketing, me, senior school, whatever it is, well we need to be consistent. If there is a problem then the community needs to know that we can deal with issues in an honest, straight forward manner. This will be a really big focus for me this year and I am hoping, if I am out there talking to people, that I'm not going to get so many people in.

And I think maybe they were also wanting to get to know me, I don't know, or testing me out... I suppose it was all of that. I'm just hoping that things settle down next year.

I: What role does stress management play in your daily life then? Is it something that helps you gain self-confidence in your leadership role? Can you explain what role stress management plays?

H: Yeah, I guess... I guess the biggest stress for me is... is doubting yourself. Cause once you start doubting yourself then that's where I find I start to worry about what other people think of me. And that is where I get my stress from. So I've got to make sure that that doesn't happen as much next year or that it doesn't happen at all. I think stress, for me as a leader, well...the key is to make sure I am doing every aspect of the job really well and not having so much, I wouldn't say negative, but so many problems or issues cropping up. That's been the biggest issue for me. I start to experience self-doubt, you start to think about whether you are doing a good job and,

especially in the first year, you begin to wonder 'Is this the right job for me? Is this the right school for me? Should I be at a Girls school?' I have had all those emotions this year. Y'know, and that is where the stress has come from, that stress is really big on... on my self-doubt and doubting myself.

I: With a lot of the issues though it seems to be external... there seem to be a lot of external factors that are coming in, y'know, parents, that is creating that self-doubt. Do you feel as though you will ever get a handle on it?

H: I think... I think for next year I am just going to have to wait and see if last year was just a situation, just a hot spot, or whether it is just a part of the culture, which I think it is because I know from the previous Head that she would have people in her office and she had an open door policy in terms of that. I... I don't see how that's sustainable though, to be quite honest, with the school increasing its size and whatever. I've got to teach, and I think we discussed this before, I've got to teach and work with the families. I've got to teach the child first to get an understanding of them, then with the classroom teacher and then let the parents know what we are doing. I've got to let them know at the start of the term, make sure those steps and those processes are... whether they're in the newsletter or not I don't know but I need to find other ways to communicate. Maybe I can tell staff to mention it in the information evenings at the start of the year, y'know, reiterate that as well. It is a significant cultural challenge here are the Junior School and I know that the previous Head always said that as a paying customer and a part of our clientele the parents are always entitled to meet with the Head of Junior School, which I do agree with, but not for some of the issues that I've been dealing with. I think some of that could be dealt with at the classroom level.

I: Do you think that parents come to you because they see you in a way that perhaps you don't see yourself? So you've come from that classroom background, and you may still very much see yourself as part of the staff, whereas the outside perception might be that you are a step removed from that. Is that something you've thought about or considered?

H: Look, I think you are right. Definitely. I think... I don't know if the perception out here is... yeah, I don't know if the perception is that the Head of Junior School is the number one problem solver. I don't know.

I: Well I guess it comes down to do you represent them, do you represent the staff or both of them and that you are just trying to find a balance.

H: True, true. It is.... look, it is what it is and I think those families that do decide to come to me to work through a particular issue... well, I... [long pause] and I keep coming back to me as a parent and thinking 'Do I want this? Is this situation so big that I need to come to the Head of Junior School?' And maybe the people from this school... maybe the families talk amongst other families and say 'Look, talk to the Head of Junior School.' I just wouldn't do that as a parent... maybe it's my educational background but I think that if you have an issue in the classroom go to the teacher. If that issue doesn't get cleared up then you'd come to the Head but I want that middle band of management, the team leaders to involved in that and I know that they've got no time and that their time is limited, but they know the children more readily than somewhat I do. Ok, I can solve the issues, to a certain extent, very quickly, y'know, whatever, but I still think it's more effective if... you're going to be a better solution if you got through a process.

I: Do the team leaders, and indeed the classroom teachers, need to be emotionally intelligent, and do they need training, to be able to take the heat out of cool an issue...

H: Yeah...

I: And trying to cool it down?

H: Yeah, definitely. I think that's really important. And obviously they are classroom teachers, but they are leaders of their classroom too. They are leading twenty little people, which leads to twenty different families in that classroom. So you're leading quite a lot of people there. And it comes back down to personality and it comes back down to a willingness to try and look at yourself and... and again, looking at young people and knowing whether they have made a good decision or a bad decision, maybe something hasn't gone right and identifying that and saying "Alright, I've made a wrong decision, I've made a mistake or whatever, let's step back and give it a go. Let's not worry about it now, let's get it back on a positive keel." And that emotional intelligence needs to kick in big time, I think... I think that education is such a social mix that you're gonna make mistakes, you're gonna make a lots of mistakes. You've got so many people, so many personalities, so many families and their... you've got to be, you've got to be at a level to say "I didn't get it right, got it right, I can do better.' You've got to be aware of all of that, and if you're aware of that you're going to have a good emotional state. Teachings not about saying "I've taught this student perfectly or taught this perfectly". There is no such thing, there is

no such thing at all. And you are going to get it wrong sometimes. I get it wrong, they get it wrong, it's just the way it is.

I: So can that intelligence around those issues, that understanding of emotions, do you feel as though it be taught or is it something that is inherent? You've either got it or you don't.

H: Well... look, what I see in young people these days, coming out of university, is...

I: You're sounding like a grandfather!

H: [laughter] they might find it a bit challenging, but I think we've got the right people here that can recognise the goods and the bads. And nobody likes... yeah, nobody likes to identify when they've made a mistake and...

I: It happens to all of us though...

H I know, I know... and being in this leadership role, boy I've made a lot of mistakes. Like the one today with the communication, where you think you've ticked all the boxes and then you think 'Shit, I haven't let marketing know!' I never even thought of marketing. I said to Beatrice this morning "I'm sorry, I never even thought of marketing." Now I know they are using the dates from the diary last year and... you think, ok, let's get it right for next year.

I: When making those mistakes, is it important to have the space and ability to remain open to learning from the experience?

H: Yeah, that's absolutely important...

I: Is being open to continuous learning and being aware of your emotions a part of your daily role?

H: Yeah, absolutely. Look, this is a profession that doesn't go well with perfectionists. It really doesn't suit those sorts of personality types. There are too many people you are involved with, too many personality types, there is just too much and... now I am on a different level again, working with a marketing department and I have never been involved in any of that. I am a classroom teacher! And suddenly I've got to change my mindset so significantly. And it's... and I said to her that was my error and I explained that I need to work on these things and to learn from this experience but I've got to be emotionally tough because I am doubting myself again.

I: Can you think of an example where emotional intelligence has helped you then with decision making?

H: [silence]

I: Or it has helped you to make the right choice?

H: [silence] Um... well I guess with the family that was concerned about going into a class next year with a teacher they didn't know. They basically walked in and said "Look, we need this changed," I think they were 100% need the change, need the change. I thought 'Oh God, this is going to be a tough one.' Both parents are doctors, highly qualified, and I thought "I am up against it here!" But once they had communicated their concerns we started to caress the issue, y'know we had a good conversation, and I think I did make the right decision from an emotional point of view... y'know I again used my experiences as a parent to try and get where they were coming from. I said we wouldn't make a decision then, that we had everything out on the table. I put in what I did, the parents put in what they did and I said "Look, let's just reflect on it now and I'd encourage you to think about it a bit more." So I didn't give a preference or anything like that. I asked them to make another appointment with Rhonda so that we talk through it again as new stuff might come up. And that went for about an hour. And it... and at the start of the meeting I was so nervous, but once I got into it and coming back to that emotional intelligence and empathising with them and then, like I say, I was running alongside them with the issue and not being to sort of "No, no, no!" or anything like that and to getting them to hear themselves out and all that sort of stuff. By the second session, dad didn't come to the second session with mum, which I thought was a really telling factor, I thought he was out of the issue and that he had accepted that everything was ok and the teacher was perfectly ok for the next year. And mum came in and said "Look, we've thought about it. We still think she'd be better with Mrs Dinkler, but look I am starting to see it from a Junior School perspective and your... your situation," In the end I think she was happy with it.

And so my intelligence, my emotional state with that, well that was probably a highlight for me for the year. And working through a good issue really well.

I: Well done.

H: Why thank you! [laughter]

I: We are coming towards the end but a question I've got for you. Do you think beginning Principals need to be encouraged to develop their emotional intelligence?

H: Yeah, definitely. And I wouldn't say for the first year, I'd say, I'd say for at least 3 years. Particularly for the first 3 years. I think, um, what would... what would it look like? How can I talk to some of the people about the issues I've dealt with this year,

where I've had no experience with what I'm dealing with. So there's the Principal, who has been great...

I: Would part of it being the peer support group of like-minded professionals you mentioned earlier?

H: Yeah, yeah.

I: What about mentoring?

H: See mentoring usually is... I don't know what your perception of mentoring is, but usually it is a person of a... I don't know, a higher rank, that is usually mentoring. There is a teaching element, a coaching, a coaching and teaching... somebody, somebody from a higher standing or whatever. Do you know what I mean?

I: Did you have something similar when you were deputy? Did you have something similar with the Head?

H: No... no. Nah, I don't.... oh, I guess with the handover it was... yeah, with the handover but not before but then, yeah definitely.

I: And in that handover you had over a term was there a focus on emotional intelligence and thinking about things that could crop up and this is how you deal with it?

H: Nah [laughter]

I: In retrospect, do you think that is something that should be in place?

H: Yeah definitely. It is the biggest....um, yeah, it is the biggest part of the role to be honest. The emotional side of things. There is time and all that, but it's what goes on in your head. You've got so many people that you've got to deal with and it's just.... [audible sigh] it's just, yeah, and here it's with the senior school as well so you've another layer on top of another layer. You're just constantly dealing with different personalities and different ideas, different philosophies, different, different, different. That, emotionally, gets so... not unbearable but so... it's just so... yeah, full on. Full on. And you get... you work out people and personalities and everything else but it's just so challenging, it really is.

I: If you were able to say anything to a beginning Principal, now that you have been in a similar role 12 months, what would you say to them about emotional intelligence?

H: I think.... I think because I... I have been... look, I got the handover and I think the handover was really good but in terms of emotionally... well can you handover emotionally? And develop your emotional intelligence? I don't know. Well... yeah, I

guess you could. If someone said 'You might get this or you might get this' you could look at how you could work through it and what emotions are involved for that person. Um... I think that would have been helpful, I guess.

I: So should beginning Principals seek those opportunities...

H: Yeah, I think so. The situation with the handover is really good, I think, and I don't know whether that needs to be a bigger thing, with a Principal coming into a role for a term or whatever as part of the handover. I don't know. That might be better. Look, I think in the first 12 months I think the emotions have been the biggest challenge for me, the emotional stuff and it'd be interesting to come back in 12 months time or 6 months time to see if I've got a bit more of a handle on it.

I: Do you feel like you need to have more of a handle on it?

H: Yeah, definitely. Definitely. The emotional side of things is a part of a person's personality as well. So self-doubt and self-worth is a part of every decision and you think, not every decision, 'Oh God...'

I: But then are those parts of a person's personality necessary to inform the decision making process? Is that emotional intelligence, to acknowledge that there are these emotions of... I don't know, fear, doubt, all of that. All of those aspects of it...

H: Yeah...

I: Is it important to acknowledge that rather than sweep it under the carpet...

H: Or make a quick decision and that's it? Yeah, I think so. I've learnt not to make quick decisions, I really have.

I: Is it better to take the time to really think about things rather than act too quickly.

H: Absolutely. And once again, with the school situation... I know you've got CEO's of businesses and lots of bigger businesses than something like a school. I've got something like 15 staff and, y'know, I've got 260 little people but little people are very complex and then you've got the added layers of something like families and in this situation then you've got senior school pushing down on something they want and people are dragging their stuff constantly back to senior school and working with about 1000 people in the end and it's just mind-boggling how emotionally aware that you need to be and how much emotional intelligence you need to be able to read people early on as well. So... and you really need to be able to talk to people. Coming back to that emotional stuff, it's just so pivotal in everything that we do.

I: And if you were to express your emotion in an interview with a parent...

H: Yeah....

I: would you be worried that there would be a perception of irrationality? Are there negative connotations, in your role do you think, to emotions?

H: [long pause] Yeah, not really. I don't know how our Asian friends would feel about it. Culturally. Hmmm... no, no I don't think so. It is what it is.

I: Cool. Ok, well thank you for that.

H: No worries, that was great.

I: Cheers.